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TORONTO'S NICK WIGGINS, LEFT, AND BURLINGTON'S CHADRACK LUFILE HELP GUIDE WICHITA STATE TO NCAA SWEET 16 PAGE 37

Put accessible cabs in motion, advocates say

Amid taxi-system review, disability issues committee urges more vehicles for city wheelchair users PAGE 4

Girl with epilepsy beats her fears

Cassidy Megan lauded on awareness day for her courage to speak out about her condition PAGE 15

Keith Urban's got no time to waste

American Idol judge is making a new album, planning a tour and trying to find family time PAGE 22

Ainslie confirms Ford's condition

Fallout. Councillor details what happened at military gala, while two fellow members of council urge mayor to seek help for alleged struggles with alcohol

Quoted

"I think it's been known around city hall for quite a while that he may have a drinking problem.... Stop denying and get help.... In some respects I wish this had gotten out earlier, because if he needs help, please do it now."

Coun. Sarah Doucette

At least eight people approached Toronto Coun. Paul Ainslie with concerns Mayor Rob Ford was impaired at a military ball.

In an email Tuesday to fellow members of the Garrison Ball organizing committee, Ainslie explained how he took action that ended with Ford being asked to leave the Feb. 23 gala.

Ainslie wrote that he was "approached by at least eight people who were concerned about the mayor's state." Ainslie said he went to speak to the mayor, found him "somewhat incoherent," and told Ford's chief of staff, Mark Towhey, "I think it would be a good idea for the mayor to leave."

Meanwhile, two other city councillors stepped forward Tuesday to urge Ford to get help for alcohol-addiction problems. Sarah Doucette and Joe Mihevc said it is time the mayor sought treatment.

A Torstar News Service story published Tuesday has made public an open secret at city hall, that those closest to Ford believe he has an alcohol problem. Five sources who have worked closely with the mayor have said they are concerned for his health and believe his job is being affected. Those sources — who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of losing their jobs and political retribution — say senior staff have made repeated attempts to persuade the mayor to go to rehab. The mayor has refused and denies he has a problem.

The email obtained by Torstar sheds more light on what happened at the Garrison Ball, a gala dinner for about 800 Canadian Armed Forces personnel, reservists and Bay Street elite that raised money for the Wounded Warriors charity.

Ainslie, an organizer of the event, sent the email to some of his fellow members on the 13-person committee that put the ball together. Six of those members, led by Toronto Port Authority chair Mark McQueen, the Garrison Ball's co-chair, put out a statement Tuesday distancing themselves from the decision to ask Ford to leave. McQueen and the others state that they did not ask Ford to leave.

Boxing legend George Chuvalo jokes with Mayor Rob Ford after receiving the key to the city on Tuesday. At the press conference, Ford was asked about the report that said some people close to him are worried about his alleged alcohol problem and that he was asked to leave a military ball due to organizers' concerns about his state. "It's an outright lie; it's the Toronto Star going after me again and again and again," Ford told a large crowd of reporters. "They're relentless. That's fine, I'll go head-to-head with the Toronto Star any time." CARLOS OSORIO/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Ainslie said Tuesday he stands by his comments.

In interviews with Torstar, some organizers and guests have described Ford as "intoxicated," "out of it," "rambling" and "incoherent."

Mihevc, a left-winger who is friendly with the mayor, said, "We have witnessed some of that which the Star reported about" and that "the appropriate response is one that encourages such a person to go and get treatment."

Doucette said she hadn't personally seen the mayor intoxicated, but "other councillors have reported seeing him at events" appearing to be impaired in some way.

Pressed for specifics, Mihevc reluctantly pointed to last summer's Salsa on St. Clair street festival, where he said he witnessed Ford "walking with a little bit of a funny bounce, and slightly slurred speech ... intoxicated."

Mihevc continued: "I don't want this to be the focus of my comments. My comments, frankly, are: My sympathies go out to the mayor on this one. We have all had colleagues ... that have had addiction issues. And the mayor, like anybody else, the appropriate response is one that encourages such a person to go and get treatment."

Ford has said the story is an "outright lie."

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Sunshine List. Four in 10 police staff earn $100K-plus

Toronto Police Service staff are earning more at a time when city departments are being pushed to cap their budgets.

Last year, 3,181 Toronto police employees — about 40 per cent of the payroll — earned more than $100,000, a huge jump from 2011, when 2,027 employees made more than $100,000.

Their names, salaries and benefits appear on the annual Sunshine List of public servants who earn more than $100,000 a year.

Police spokesman Mark Pugash said the explanation lies in a collective agreement negotiated in 2011 that gave employees an 11.5 per cent salary increase spread out over four years, until 2014.

"As annual increases kick in … more and more people are brought within the Sunshine List without working any overtime," Pugash said.

Police Chief Bill Blair
RENE JOHNSTON/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Top-paid police staff

- Chief Bill Blair: $367,719.94 in salary, $3,006.72 in benefits.
- Deputy chief Peter Sloly: $255,499.83 in salary, $2,092.15 in benefits.
- CAO Tony Veneziano: $254,143.85 in salary, $13,618.50 in benefits.
- Deputy chief Michael Federico: $243,469.38 in salary, $15,218.59 in benefits.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Revenue hunting. Drivers to pay to ride in HOV lanes?

The rules for Ontario's high-occupancy-vehicle lanes could be changed to allow drivers without passengers to pay a premium, Finance Minister Charles Sousa said on Tuesday.

The move could generate new revenue to help fund public transit and infrastructure projects, Sousa said.

"You don't have to use them if you don't want to, but should you want to and you're single in the car, there's an opportunity there to revenue source some of that initiative."

Premier Kathleen Wynne has said the Liberals are considering road tolls or some form of tax to fund transit expansion and to pay for upgrading municipal roads and bridges across Ontario. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Charles Sousa THE CANADIAN PRESS

Report. Drug reactions sending seniors to hospital

Blood thinners, painkillers and chemotherapy drugs that are supposed to be helping seniors are sending them to hospital at alarming rates, a new report shows.

Seniors are five times more likely to be hospitalized for adverse drug reactions than the general population, the Canadian Institute for Health Information says.

"These drugs require careful monitoring," said Jordan Hunt, one of the study's lead authors.

The report found that blood thinners accounted for one of the highest rates of hospitalization for adverse reactions among seniors, at 12.6 per cent of cases. On average, seniors are more likely to suffer adverse reactions simply because they're prescribed more medications than most people.

The study shows 60 per cent of Canadian seniors take five or more medications a year; 20 per cent of them take more than 10. While seniors make up roughly 14 per cent of Canada's population, they represented nearly 60 per cent of hospitalizations for adverse drug reactions between 2006 and 2011.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Panda diplomacy has its limits, expert says

The bear truth.

Toronto visit a nice 'goodwill gesture,' but China-Canada relations need work

When giant pandas Er Shun and Da Mao arrived in Toronto this week, they were met by the likes of Prime Minister Stephen Harper and China's ambassador to Canada, Zhang Junsai.

But the reality is that relations were chilly during Harper's first years as prime minister, when Canada was emphasizing human rights and Canadian values in its dealings with China. Some feared that could jeopardize business interests.

Since 2009, Canada has softened its stance and pursued commercial relations.

Ping-Pong to pandas

- China sent two bears to the National Zoo in Washington, D.C., in 1972, under armed guard for fear of attacks by anti-Communist radicals.
- That bout of panda diplomacy came a year after China invited the U.S. table-tennis team to Japan, the first in a series of events signalling a political thaw, in what became known as Ping-Pong diplomacy.

Wenran Jiang, a University of Alberta professor and government adviser, agreed pandas are highly symbolic, but said they can't do all the work.

"Let's be clear that panda diplomacy has its limits. The fundamentals of Canada's relations with China are not determined by whether we have pandas or not," Jiang said, calling for a long-term strategy to make sure Canada isn't left behind as China becomes increasingly powerful on the world stage.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

A panda reaches for Prime Minister Stephen Harper at a zoo in Chongqing, China, last February. Harper petitioned China for the 10-year loan of the pandas, which comes with a $1 million annual fee. THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

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Advocates push for more wheelchair-accessible taxis

Transportation. There are just 85 accessible taxi licenses, making up 3.5 per cent of all taxis in Toronto

JESSICA SMITH
jessica.smith@metronews.ca

Most able-bodied people would be outraged if their taxi driver charged them $35 for a two-block ride, but many wheelchair users in Toronto say that has been their experience.

The city is undergoing a major review of the taxi system and the Disability Issues Committee is asking for a major change — to make all taxis wheelchair accessible by 2025 and a "significant number" accessible by the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games in 2015.

Ann Kennedy, who works at Spinal Cord Injury Ontario and uses accessible taxis, says 2025 is too long a wait.

In her experience, all of the taxi companies charge a flat rate for wheelchair customers, instead of a metered rate.

"Even if you're only going two blocks, you pay something in the neighbourhood of $35 to $45," she said. "I haven't been in a standard meter rate taxi in a long time, but I know it's not that much."

That's if people in wheelchairs can get a cab in the first place, Kennedy said. Sometimes a taxi will be available, other times there just isn't one, because most accessible taxis are contracted to Wheel-Trans and their customers will take priority.

"There's no spontaneity in life when you have to organize your transportation a day in advance," she said.

For example, Kennedy says one of her friends was recently offered a last-minute doctor's appointment but found the only way to get there was to drive her power wheelchair in -12 C degree weather. Even then, she was a half-hour late.

The reason it's so hard to get an accessible taxi in Toronto is because there are only 85 accessible taxi licenses, making up only 3.5 per cent of all taxis in the city, including the cabs under contract with Wheel-Trans.

Unleashing that suppressed demand for taxicabs could benefit taxi drivers and companies, who often complain there are not enough fares to go around, said James Cooper, head of Taxi Research Partners, who has been hired by the city to delve into Toronto's taxi problems and advise city councillors about how many cabs should be on our streets.

"We have people choosing to not even make a trip because they don't believe the services will be there," Cooper said.

Toronto's lack of accessible taxis could hit a crisis point during the Parapan Am Games, advocates say.

Quoted

"Some have to go to the hospital more, some can't get to or use the TTC routes. We are potentially a frequent user of accessible taxis. I hope that a taxi company would see that people with disabilities are a major customer base." Yin Brown, Disability Issues Committee

Peter Grande, executive vice-president of Motion Group of Companies, with the MV-1 purpose-built wheelchair-accessible vehicle. Motion Group is the exclusive Canadian distributor of this model, which has an electric ramp that can be set to two lengths. PHOTO COURTESY JIL MCINTOSH

Accessible transportation plan for Games under fire

Will there enough taxis like this one for the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games in 2015? TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

The city needs to move fast if it's going to have an accessible taxi service ready for the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games in 2015, says Yin Brown, a member of the Disability Issues Committee.

"Even right now, there are insufficient accessible taxis on demand. You can imagine, when we have to host all these people. How is that going to happen?" she said. "I don't see how they're going to do it, unless they increase the number of accessible taxis and start planning for it now."

Pan Am/Parapan Am Games

Organizers of the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games will ensure that the Games are as accessible as possible for all of the visitors and participants, said spokesman Teddy Katz. Games organizers are working with the Ministry of Transportation and with municipalities on an accessible transportation plan, which is on track to be completed later this year. Katz couldn't say at this time if Toronto's accessible taxi system would play any role in that plan.

John Nunziata is a lobbyist representing Wheelchair Accessible Transit Inc., which offers flat-rate accessible transportation and is seeking to set up an accessible taxi service offering metered fares.

He warned the city's licensing and standards committee at their March meeting that Toronto could be "embarrassed" by the situation during the games.

"The city need a contingency plan in order to ensure that when those Games take place, when the eyes of the world are on the City of Toronto, that the City of Toronto is not embarrassed by the fact that a good number of those athletes and their families and others will not be able to secure an accessible vehicle or be treated equally in Toronto," he said.

JESSICA SMITH/METRO

Recording studio slaying

T.O. rapper's shooting upgraded to murder

Toronto police have laid an additional charge of first-degree murder in the shooting death of an aspiring rapper at a recording studio.

Investigators say Anthony Spencer, 23, was killed early on the morning of Jan. 21, 2012, during an alleged robbery while he was recording in a basement studio in the city's east end. On Tuesday, Chever Ashley had a charge of accessory after the fact to murder upgraded to first-degree murder, and now faces additional counts of aggravated assault and robbery while armed with a firearm, on top of 10 other offences.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Crush Exam Stress

Students will 'Just Dance' their way into record books

On April 6, students from York, Carleton, St. Mary's, Simon Frasier, University of Alberta, University of Waterloo, University of Victoria, University of Alberta and local community members will Crush Exam Stress and Just Dance simultaneously to Flo Rida's Good Feelin' as part of a cross-Canada attempt to set a World Record.

The school that secures the largest attendance and shows the most team spirit will be rewarded with a cheque from partners Ubisoft to donate to an organization of their choice.

METRO

Transition funding

Three more racetracks saved

Transition funding agreements that will save jobs have been reached with three more racetracks to replace the cancelled revenue-sharing slots program, Premier Kathleen Wynne said Tuesday. The racetracks are Flamboro Downs near Hamilton, Georgian Downs near Barrie and the Fort Erie track in the Niagara area, which will reopen for racing.

Woodbine Racetrack in Toronto THE CANADIAN PRESS

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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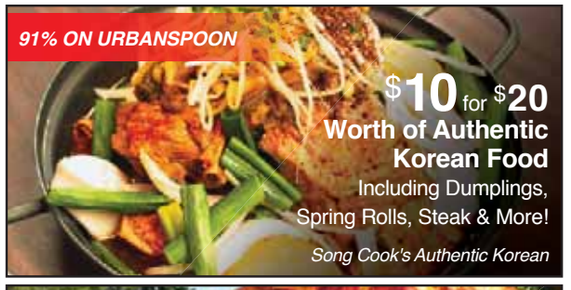

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Kleinfeld coming to Hudson's Bay store

Say Yes to the Dress. Famous bridal retailer to set up boutique at Queen Street store

Hudson's Bay is moving into the luxury wedding gown business after saying yes to a union with New York's Kleinfeld Bridal.

The deal gives the department store exclusive rights to the brand in Canada, with plans to open a Kleinfeld boutique in 2014 on Queen Street.

"Without question, they are the best in class in the wedding dress business. They are the destination for brides in the United States," said Mary Turner, vice-president of private brands and global sourcing for Hudson's Bay.

Canadian brides are also making the trek to the Kleinfeld salon in Chelsea, N.Y., made famous by the reality show Say Yes to the Dress, where brides struggle to find their dream gown.

Kleinfeld's co-owner Ronald Rothstein said the show's success has drawn several thousand Canadian brides a year.

Rothstein said gowns will probably start at $1,500, though most will probably range from $2,500 to $7,500, and prices can go as high as $30,000.

Retail therapy?

"Nobody in Canada can offer the experience, the depth of inventory, the patience level."

Kleinfeld co-owner Ronald Rothstein

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Hudson's Bay is bringing Kleinfeld to Canada. CNW GROUP/HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY

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Queen's Park. $27M earmarked for mental health across campuses

From exam panic to money woes to the ache of true mental disorder, Ontario post-secondary students will be able to dial up help starting this fall on a special new 24-hour helpline.

It's one of 10 projects unveiled by Queen's Park Tuesday to help students with mental health problems. The province will also fund Humber College to train 2,500 campus workers across the province in how to recognize signs of mental distress.

"Early identification and intervention can help put young people back on track," said MPP Brad Duguid, minister of training, colleges and universities, who announced that $27 million would be earmarked over three years for mental health programs, starting with $12.3 million.

Jen McMillen, Humber's director of student access, wellness and development, said the two-day course in "mental health first aid" trains anyone from professors to security guards to students to "look for signs of a change in behaviour; someone suddenly showing up late or dishevelled or who no longer makes eye contact." It also trains them how to reach out to the person in trouble.

The phone line, aimed at 18- to 25-year-olds, will be run jointly by Kids Help Phone with post-secondary institutions, the referral service ConnexOntario, and Ontario 211, which provides community information.

The province also launched an online hub for expert advice that campus staff can use to help their students.

Ryerson and the Ontario College of Art and Design University will also test a new model for addressing campus mental health issues.

LGBT support

The province is also funding a new initiative to improve student life for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students using peer educators.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Snowplow death

Deliberations in trial of man who killed cop to resume today

A jury deciding the fate of a man who hit and killed a Toronto police officer with a snowplow retired Tuesday night without reaching a verdict.

The central issue for the jury is the role psychosis played in the mind of Richard Kachkar, 46, when he killed Sgt. Ryan Russell, 35, two years ago.

Jurors deliberated until nearly 9 p.m. Tuesday after considering the case for about five hours on Monday.

The judge has said there is no doubt that Kachkar was the man who stole the plow and hit Russell, but what they must weigh is his mental state at the time.

The defence has urged the jury to find Kachkar not criminally responsible on account of mental disorder, while the Crown has argued for a first-degree murder conviction.

The judge has told the jury they should not be concerned with the consequences of their verdict, but he assured them that not criminally responsible doesn't mean Kachkar would immediately return to the community.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Italian court orders retrial for Amanda Knox and ex-boyfriend

Protracted murder case. Pair were convicted and later acquitted in slashing of roommate

Italy's highest criminal court ordered a whole new trial for Amanda Knox and her former Italian boyfriend on Tuesday, overturning their acquittals in the gruesome slaying of her British roommate.

Knox, now a 25-year-old University of Washington student in Seattle, called the decision "painful" but said she was confident she would be exonerated.

The American left Italy a free woman after her 2011 acquittal — but only after serving nearly four years of a 26-year prison sentence from a lower court that convicted her of murdering Meredith Kercher. The 21-year-old British exchange student's body was found in November 2007 in a rented house the two shared in the Italian town of Perugia. Her throat had been slit.

Raffaele Sollecito, Knox's Italian boyfriend at the time, was also convicted, sentenced and later acquitted.

It could be months before a date is set for a fresh trial for Knox and Sollecito.

Italian law cannot compel Knox to return for the new trial and one of her lawyers, Carlo Dalla Vedova, said she had no plans to do so.

It was a tough blow for the former exchange student, whose parents have had to mortgage both their homes to raise funds for her lengthy, expensive defence.

Prosecutors alleged that Kercher was the victim of a drug-fuelled sex game gone awry. Knox and Sollecito denied wrongdoing and said they weren't in the apartment that night, although they acknowledged they had smoked marijuana and their memories were clouded.

An Ivory Coast man, Rudy Guede, was convicted of the Kercher slaying in a separate proceeding and is serving a 16-year sentence.

Whether Knox ever returns to Italy to serve more prison time depends on a string of ifs and unknowns.

Whether Italy actually requests extradition will be a political decision made by a future Italian government.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Amanda Knox in 2011 after hearing the verdict that overturned her murder conviction. PIER PAOLO CITO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Prepared statement

Knox reacts

Knox said it was "painful to receive the news," after the trial showed the prosecution case was "unfounded and unfair."

"My family and I will face this continuing legal battle as we always have, confident in the truth and with our heads held high in the face of ... unreasonable adversity," the 25-year-old said in a statement Tuesday.

Mark Waterbury, author of The Monster of Perugia: The Framing of Amanda Knox, said, "It just amazes me that the system drags on ... when the case would have been thrown out in the United States long ago."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

War on drugs. Police went too doggone far in search, says U.S. Supreme Court

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that police violated a Miami-area homeowner's constitutional rights by using a dog to sniff outside the home being used to grow marijuana.

The court voted 5-4 to uphold a court decision throwing out the evidence seized because of Franky the dog's alert to police.

Justice Antonin Scalia said a house and its surroundings are constitutionally protected. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Franky, a narcotics-detector canine. ALAN DIAZ/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Royal Caribbean

Death on cruise 'suspicious': FBI

An FBI spokesman says a death aboard a Royal Caribbean cruise ship has been classified as suspicious.

The FBI is investigating the death of a 62-year-old Virginia woman who travelled on the Enchantment of the Seas. Royal Caribbean says the woman's husband found her body inside her cabin on Sunday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gay-marriage showdown in U.S. may bring little change

The U.S. Supreme Court hinted that a broad ruling on gay marriage may not be coming any time soon, as justices appeared wary of the divisive issue.

The court turns its attention Wednesday to a case that challenges the federal law defining marriage as being between a man and a woman. On Tuesday, the nine justices considered California's ban on same-sex marriage, which a federal appeals court overturned.

Too soon?

"You want us to step in and render a decision (on gay marriage), which is newer than cellphones or the Internet?"

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito

It's the Supreme Court's first major examination of gay rights in a decade.

Supporters of gay marriage hope for a broad ruling that would erase bans nationwide.

But justices on the conservative-leaning Supreme Court hinted Tuesday that they would not make a broad ruling on so new an issue. The court is not expected to rule before late June.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Moonshine, aftershave killing droves in ex-Soviet nations

A supermarket in Ternopil, western Ukraine. ROMAN ZACHARIJ/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Alcohol causes 40 to 60 per cent of premature deaths among working-age men and a third of women in the former Soviet nations, according to research from medical journal The Lancet. Homemade and non-commercial spirits are blamed, along with government failures, for the death of around a million people annually.

"The big problem is the easy availability of spirits from pharmacies, sold as products such as aftershave," Martin McKee, Lancet author and alcohol specialist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, told Metro. "Everyone knows about this, but there is a reluctance toward programs with a medical approach."

Of the 12 ex-Soviet states, Ukraine and Belarus are the greatest concerns, says McKee. "There are no restrictions, and the problems continue to grow."

Russia is one of the highest consumers of alcohol and has the highest risk rating from the World Health Organization. There has been progress — spirits are more tightly controlled, and beer has replaced vodka as the most popular drink — but the problem is growing.

"Despite some advances, the situation is desperate," said Dr. Yury Razvodovsky, alcohol and drug researcher at Belarus' Grodno State Medical University. "It's crucial to improve the quality of licensed alcohol as many people believe homemade products are better, explaining the popularity of moonshine." Police must target illegal production, now a major industry, Razvodovsky added.

KIERON MONKS/METRO WORLD NEWS

Perils of alcohol

"The cause of two-thirds of alcohol mortality is sudden cardiac arrest with no warning," said Kirill Danishevsky, co-chair of Control Alcohol!, a Russian grassroots group.

- The Lancet report found that alcohol increased the risk of diseases such as tuberculosis.
- Drinking was also tied to homicide rates.

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Harry in the U.S. Prince will keep his clothes on this time: N.J. governor

Gov. Chris Christie says no one will be getting naked when Prince Harry visits New Jersey in May.

A listener asked Christie on a radio call-in show Monday if there are any plans to make sure the prince behaves.

Christie says he'll be with Harry the entire time and that Queen Elizabeth II knows she can trust her grandson with the governor of New Jersey.

On his last U.S. visit, the third in line to the British throne was caught frolicking in the nude with a woman in Las Vegas after an alleged game of strip billiards. The governor says lots of young people make mistakes.

Christie, speaking on TownSquare Media's Ask the Governor program, says he's thrilled the prince wants to see the damage caused by Superstorm Sandy and be helpful.

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Prince Harry gives a thumbs-up after playing a charity polo match in Campinas, Brazil, on March 11, 2012. St. James's Palace says Prince Harry is returning to the U.S., but this time he's skipping Las Vegas. ANDRE PENNER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

London calling for some warmer weather

Icicles hang from a statue in Trafalgar Square, central London, in the midst of chilly conditions on Tuesday. The cold weather is predicted to continue in the coming days, with freezing temperatures and high winds hitting many regions of Britain.

ANDREW MATTHEWS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Wallaceburg, Ont.

Alleged meat thief flees police

A hungry thief led police on a chase through the streets of a small southwestern Ontario town Monday, tossing pilfered meat on the ground as he fled. The 27-year-old suspect was spotted at the No Frills grocery store in Wallaceburg — south of Sarnia — around 6 p.m. Police say he attempted to leave the store without paying for about $55 worth of meat.

LUKE SIMCOE/METRO ONLINE

Ownership claim

Facebook contract a fake: Judge

A New York man's multibillion-dollar lawsuit claiming half-ownership of Facebook Inc. should be dismissed, a federal judge recommended Tuesday.

Siding with the Internet company and its founder, Mark Zuckerberg, Magistrate Judge Leslie Foschio said the contract on which Paul Ceglia based his case was faked.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Judge Judy's son undermining 2010 child-rape case: Sheriff

Investigation. Adam Levy, a New York attorney, denies allegations against him

A suburban district attorney who is the son of TV's Judge Judy is being accused of interfering in a child-rape case in which the suspect is his personal trainer.

Putnam County District Attorney Adam Levy has recused himself. But the local sheriff says Levy is still trying to influence, and perhaps undermine, the investigation.

Levy says he has acted properly and the sheriff's allegations are unfounded.

The two politicians have also argued over whether the suspect lived with Levy and whether Levy's recusal was his own idea.

The rape case is being prosecuted by the district attorney from neighbouring Westchester County. A spokesman wouldn't say whether Levy would be questioned.

Levy's mother, Judy Sheindlin of Judge Judy, says the investigation should focus on the rape case.

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Alexandru Ionut Hossu, 35, is charged with raping a 12-year-old girl in 2010.

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Great apes' survival at risk: UN

Frightening numbers. About 3,000 great apes are estimated to be traded illegally every year, the report says

The multibillion-dollar trade in illegal wildlife — clandestine trafficking that has driven iconic creatures like the tiger to near-extinction — is also threatening the survival of great apes, a new UN report says.

Endangered chimpanzees, orangutans, gorillas and bonobos are disappearing from the wild in frightening numbers, as private owners pay top dollar for exotic pets, while disreputable zoos, amusement parks and travelling circuses clamour for smuggled primates to entertain audiences. More than 22,000 great apes are estimated to have been traded illegally over a seven-year period ending in 2011.

Apes are hunted in their own habitats, which are concentrated in central and western Africa, by sophisticated smugglers who transport them on private cargo planes using small airstrips in the African bush. Their destination is usually the Middle East and Asia.

Lax enforcement and corruption make it easy to smuggle the animals through African cities like Nairobi, Kenya, and Khartoum, Sudan, which are trafficking hubs. Bangkok, the Thai capital, is a major hub for the orangutan trade.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Where they go

- In countries like Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Lebanon, great apes are purchased to display as show pieces in private gardens and menageries.
- In Asia, the animals are typically destined for public zoos and amusement parks. China is a main destination for gorillas and chimpanzees. Thailand and Cambodia have recorded cases of orangutans being used for entertainment in "clumsy boxing matches," the UN report said.

An orangutan is shown in a boxing show at a private zoo in Thailand. The multibillion-dollar trade in illegal wildlife is threatening the survival of great apes, a new UN report says. APICHART WEERAWONG/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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The Malaysian government's mass culling of macaques is endangering them, activists warn.
WONG MAYE-E/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Malaysia under fire for mass cull of macaques

Animal activists on Tuesday criticized the Malaysian government for the mass culling of nearly 100,000 macaques a year, warning it threatens their survival.

The country's wildlife department defended the move as an internationally accepted method to control a growing population of pest species. Last year, 97,119 monkeys were killed mostly in urban and agricultural areas, where they destroyed crops and attacked people, said senior wildlife official Salman Saaban.

This was up from nearly 88,000 macaques killed in 2011, mostly by gun shot as they are difficult to trap, he said.

Malaysia's Society of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals said the mass slaughter was alarming and called for better efforts to manage the conflict, including sterilizing the females. "The continued mass culling is certain to jeopardize the survival of the macaques. If we continue at this rate, there will be none left in the next decade," said opposition politician N. Surendran.

Salman said the culling does not threaten the macaques with extinction as it was being carried out only in urban and suburban areas, while the population in protected forests was untouched.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Appalled

British animal protection group BUAV said Malaysia was applauded in 2008 for reinstating a ban on the export of macaques for research purposes but it was appalled now with the mass killing.

Egyptian blogger accused of instigating violence released

Social media activism. Prominent blogger's lawyers say prosecution 'did no investigative efforts at all'

Egyptian authorities released a prominent Egyptian blogger Tuesday after he refused to co-operate with prosecutors over allegations of instigating violence against the country's most powerful Islamist group in comments on social media.

The blogger, Alaa Abdel-Fattah, was freed following his demand that an investigative judge take over his case, according to one of his lawyers, Malek Adly. His attorneys are now awaiting a decision on the request.

Abdel-Fattah handed himself in to authorities earlier Tuesday, a day after the country's prosecutor general ordered his arrest, along with four other activists also accused of inciting violence.

The arrest warrants stoked concerns among Egypt's opposition that Islamist President Mohammed Morsi was using the prosecutor's office to go after political opponents.

The allegations against the activists are rooted in clashes between supporters and opponents of Morsi outside the headquarters of the Muslim Brotherhood in Cairo last week that left 200 people injured.

Activists say the arrest warrants could herald a wave of arrests of opposition leaders.

Abdel-Fattah and the other activists questioned the independence of the prosecutor general, saying he is beholden to Morsi.

The president appointed the prosecutor late last year despite an uproar from the judiciary.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Egyptian blogger Alaa Abdel-Fattah is surrounded by supporters after his release from detention in Cairo, Egypt, Tuesday. Abdel-Fattah handed himself in to authorities earlier Tuesday, a day after the country's prosecutor general ordered his arrest. MOSTAFA DARWISH/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Judge to decide if Craigslist killer will face execution

In this Feb. 27 photo, Richard Beasley smiles as he is wheeled into court in Akron, Ohio. AKRON BEACON JOURNAL, MIKE CARDEW/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

An Ohio judge must make a life-or-death decision in sentencing a self-styled street preacher in the murders of three down-and-out men lured by Craigslist job offers.

Judge Lynne Callahan had scheduled sentencing for Tuesday afternoon for 53-year-old Richard Beasley of Akron, but the sentencing was postponed until April 4.

Last week the jury that convicted him of murder recommended that he be executed, but the judge has the option of reducing the sentence to life in prison.

Co-defendant Brogan Rafferty, who was 16 at the time of the crimes in 2011, was sentenced by the same judge last year to life without parole. Because of his age, he wasn't eligible for the death penalty.

Three men were killed, and a fourth, who was wounded, testified at Beasley's trial.

Beasley, who sat through the proceedings in a wheelchair he uses because of back pain, testified at his trial that the survivor pulled a gun on him first in retaliation for being a police informant in a motorcycle club investigation.

Prosecutor Jonathan Baumoel said last week that Ohio reserves the death penalty for "the worst of the worst" and, as such, said Beasley deserves to be executed.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Partners in crime

Richard Beasley returned to Ohio from Texas in 2004 after serving several years in prison on a burglary conviction. Brogan Rafferty, who had a troubled family life, described Beasley as a friend and mentor.

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Curfews imposed in Myanmar as violence spreads

Religious tensions. Unrest sparked last week in the central city of Meikhtila; clashes last year left hundreds dead in the west

Authorities in Myanmar imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew in three townships on Tuesday after anti-Muslim religious violence touched new parts of the country, edging closer to the main city of Yangon.

State television reported incidents in the three townships in Bago region, all within 150 kilometres of Yangon. The latest attack Monday night was in Gyobingauk, where it said "troublemakers" damaged a religious building, shops and some houses. The report said similar attacks on religious buildings, shops and houses occurred Sunday night. Official reports use the term "religious buildings" in an apparent attempt to dampen passion, though in most cases the targets were reportedly mosques.

A Myanmar Muslim in Malaysia protests against unrest in Meikhtila, Monday. LAI SENG SIN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The announcement said an emergency law known as Section 144 would be applied in the three townships which will ban public assemblies, marches and speeches, and impose a 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew.

The religious unrest began with rioting a week ago in the central city of Meikhtila, sparked by a dispute between a Muslim shop owner and his Buddhist customers.

The New Light of Myanmar newspaper said Tuesday that eight more bodies were found in Meikhtila as soldiers cleared devastated areas set ablaze by anti-Muslim mobs during three days of rioting, bringing the death toll to 40.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hard times remembered

Former political prisoner Fatos Lubonja speaks during the inauguration ceremony of a memorial to commemorate all former political prisoners who suffered under the Communist regime of Albania's late dictator Enver Hoxha, in Tirana, Tuesday. The memorial is formed of a 2.4-tonne fragment of the Berlin Wall placed next to a concrete bunker and supports taken from a notorious mine in Spac, some 100 kilometres to the north, where political prisoners were once forced to work under the notorious Hoxha regime. HEKTOR PUSTINA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Coming to America

Prosecutors break up trafficking ring

Romanian prosecutors have searched tourism agencies on suspicion they are a front for a ring that trafficks Romanians into the U.S. and Canada, through Mexico. Some 600 people travelled to Mexico and of those, 300 were discovered in the U.S., prosecutors said.

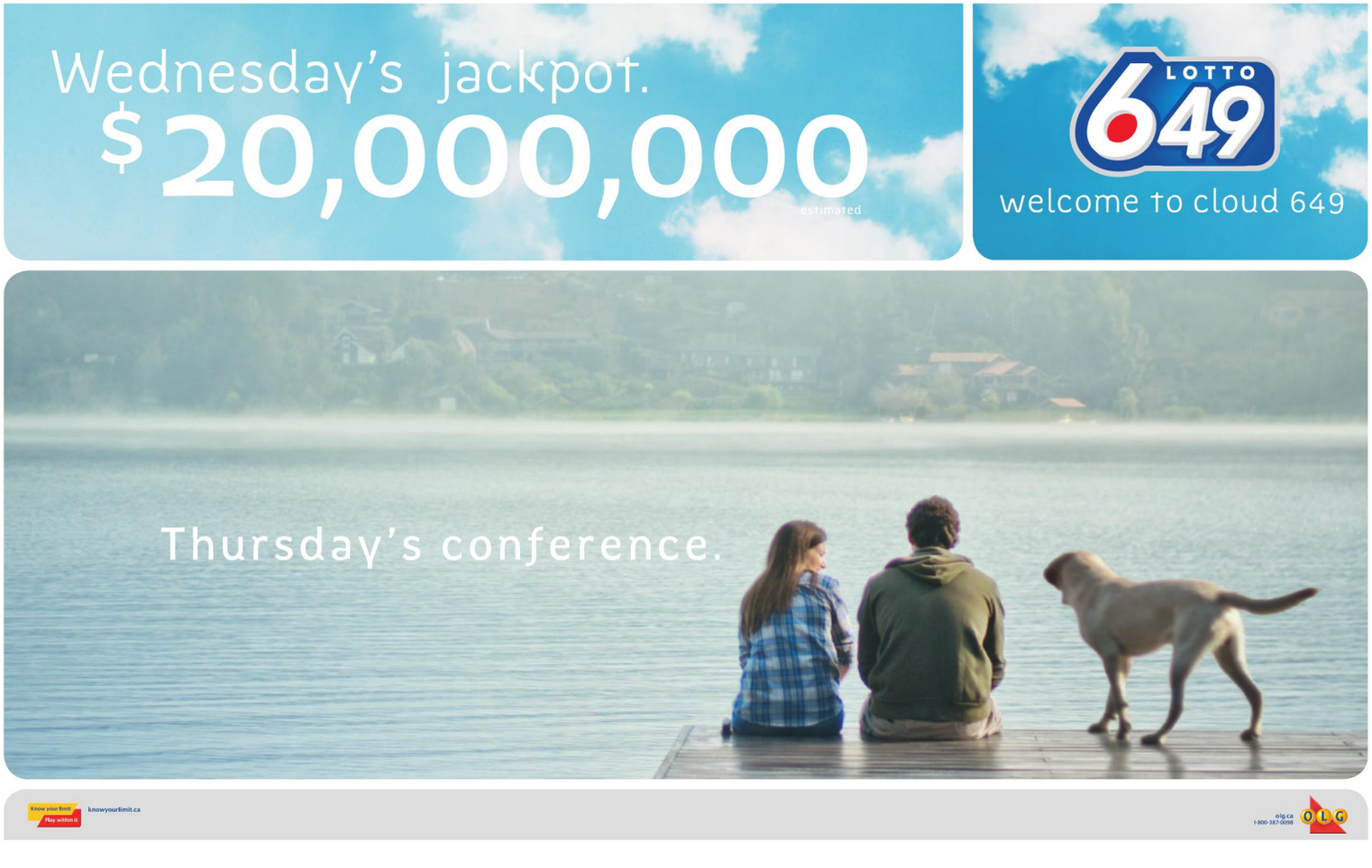
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

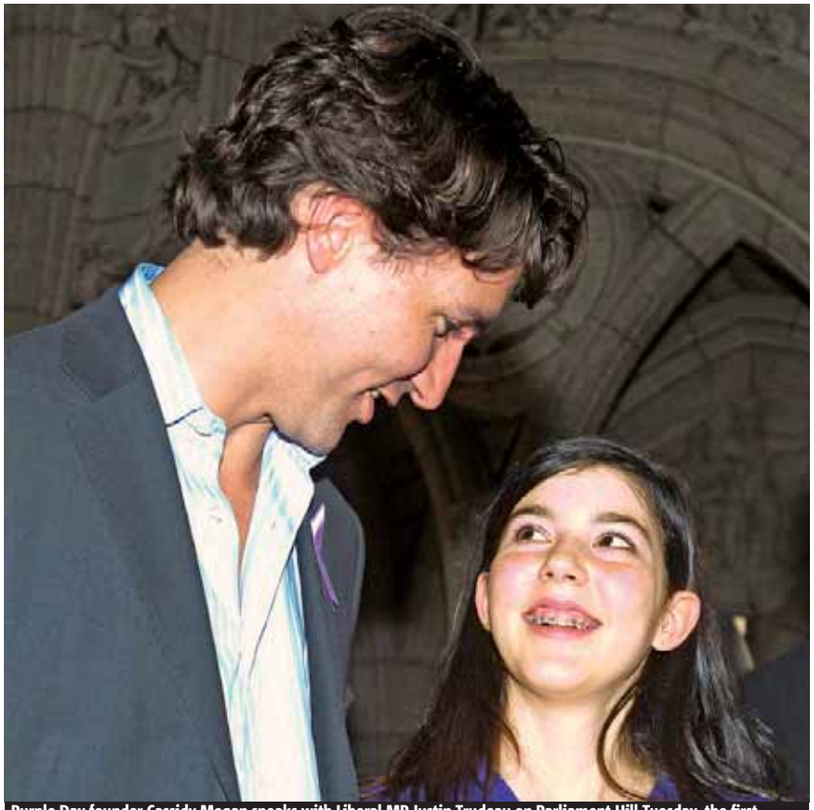
Poland

Trial opens for men who allegedly stole van with coffins

Three men have gone on trial in Poland, suspected of having stolen a van in Germany that contained 12 coffins. They were arrested in October and the coffins — with bodies — were found afterward in the woods. The thieves had apparently dumped the coffins after they realized the van was on its way to a crematorium. The men could face up to 10 years in prison.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS





Purple Day founder Cassidy Megan speaks with Liberal MP Justin Trudeau on Parliament Hill Tuesday, the first official day for epilepsy awareness. ADRIAN WYLD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

‘Every time my mom tells that story, she starts to cry’

Purple Day. Girl’s heroic tale of opening up about her epilepsy celebrated on first awareness day

A nine-year-old girl’s ability to confront and conquer her fear of telling people about her epilepsy was celebrated Tuesday on Parliament Hill with the first official Purple Day.

Cassidy Megan, who is now 14, found out she had the condition when she was in Grade 1, but was too embarrassed and afraid to tell her classmates. One day the Epilepsy Association of Nova Scotia came to give a presentation to her class. When the other students asked questions and about the disorder, she found the courage to tell them about her condition.

“Every time my mom tells that story, she starts to cry,” Cassidy said.

It was her first day in the nation’s capital and she attracted the man everyone expects to lead the Liberal party after a convention next month.

“Thank you so much for being such a strong leader on this,” Justin Trudeau told her.

Cassidy’s mother’s eyes brimmed with tears of pride as she took in her daughter’s moment.

“I’m proud that she had the courage to speak out, and to help people,” Angela Megan said.

The publicity is nothing new for Cassidy. Her name appeared in dozens of newspapers across the world on earlier Purple Days. She’s met the Queen and Prince William. Her next goal: get on the Ellen DeGeneres Show. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Around the world

- Lavender is the internationally designated colour for epilepsy. In many countries, the colour represents isolation and solitude which many people living with epilepsy experience.
- Three hundred thousand Canadians are afflicted with epilepsy. The neurological condition affects over 50 million people in the world — more than multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy and Parkinson’s disease combined.
- Seventy other countries organize a Purple Day.

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Mortgages. BMO to end low rate that had Flaherty seeing red

Bank of Montreal will end a controversial low mortgage rate at the end of this week, when the limited-time offer runs out.

The bank says the posted rate for a fixed five-year mortgage will return to 3.09 per cent, where it was before being lowered to 2.99 per cent.

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty had called Bank of Montreal to express his disapproval of its decision to offer the special low rate starting on March 4.

The minister also praised other banks when they didn't follow Bank of Montreal's lead and had one of his officials make a call when Manulife later announced a rate cut. Manulife decided a day later to reverse its cut, but BMO kept its offer in place.

The official date for the BMO change is Friday, but Canadian banks will be closed that day for the Good Friday holiday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Employees of the Bank of Cyprus protest in Nicosia, Cyprus, on Tuesday in the wake of a controversial deal that will allow the country to qualify for an international bailout. PETROS KARADJIAS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cyprus bank shutdown extended two more days

EU financial crisis.
Authorities hope to stop people draining accounts

Cypriot businesses were under increasing strain to keep running on Tuesday after financial authorities stretched the country's bank closure into a second week in a harried attempt to stop depositors from rushing to drain their accounts.

Cyprus' Central Bank governor, Panicos Demetriades, said "superhuman efforts are being made" to open banks on Thursday.

"Temporary" restrictions will be imposed on financial transactions once the banks do open, he said, but he would not specify what they would be or how long they would be in place.

All but two of the country's largest lenders had been due to reopen Tuesday, after being shut down since March 16 to stop savers from withdrawing all their money while politicians figured out how to raise the funds necessary for Cyprus to qualify for an international bailout. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Regulator ups capital buffer on 6 biggest banks

Too big to fail. Move aims to limit the chance a major bank 'would encounter distress or failure,' says OSFI head

The federal financial supervisor has slapped a too-big-to-fail label on Canada's six largest banks, declaring they will need to carry a bigger capital buffer and be subjected to stricter supervision than their smaller peers.

The Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions said Tuesday that the "systemically important" designation stems from a framework issued by the Basel committee on banking oversight in October that set out guidelines for assessing domestic financial institutions.

Under the new OSFI requirement, the Bank of Montreal, Bank of Nova Scotia, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, National Bank of Canada, Royal Bank of Canada and Toronto-Dominion Bank will be subject to an additional one per cent capital buffer for risk.

The banks will need to have a common equity tier 1 ratio of eight per cent as compared with seven per cent for smaller, less important financial institutions as of Jan. 1, 2016.

"The measures ... are designed to limit the likelihood that a major bank would encounter distress or failure that could negatively impact the Canadian economy or taxpayers," OSFI head Julie Dickson said in a news release.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"I really do believe they are the most solid, secure, safest banks in the world and the World Economic Forum has said so five years in a row ... We also have a very diligent regulator, unlike the Europeans."

Economics professor Ian Lee of the Sprott School of Business

When studying really pays off

Nick d'Aloisio, 17, displays his mobile application Summly in London, U.K. on Tuesday. He has become one of Britain's youngest Internet entrepreneurs after selling the app to search giant Yahoo. D'Aloisio, who dreamed up the idea for the content-shortening program when he was studying for his exams, said he was surprised by the deal. As with its other recent acquisitions, Yahoo didn't disclose how much it is paying for Summly, although British newspapers put the deal's value at several million dollars. MATT DUNHAM/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pearson

Air Canada system will send checked bags to U.S. flights

Air Canada passengers connecting to flights to the U.S. through Toronto's Pearson airport no longer have to retrieve their checked bags for U.S. customs inspection. The airline says a new system will automatically send travellers' checked baggage to connecting flights. Passengers previously had been required to collect their checked baggage before clearing U.S. customs.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market Minute

DOLLAR 98.39¢ (+0.47¢)

TSX 12,706.38 (+25.67)

OIL $96.34 US (+$1.53)

GOLD $1,595.70 US (-$8.80)

Natural gas: $4 US (+14¢)
Dow Jones: 14,559.65 (+111.90)

Real estate. Home-buying intentions plunge: Survey

The number of Canadians expecting to buy a home within two years has dropped dramatically even though overall confidence in real estate remains strong, according to an annual survey published Tuesday by Royal Bank of Canada.

The poll found 15 per cent of those surveyed said they were likely to buy in the next two years, a drop from 27 per cent of respondents in last year's survey.

The 12 percentage point drop is the biggest recorded by the poll, now in its 20th year.

Still, an overwhelming majority of those polled (84 per cent) felt real estate remained as a sound investment, while 52 per cent said now is a good time to get into the market.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Tech speak. 'Ogooglebar' causes dustup in Sweden

Sweden's language watchdog has accused Google of trying to control the Swedish language in a dispute over the definition of the term "ungoogleable."

The Swedish version of the word, "ogooglebar," made the Language Council of Sweden's 2012 list of words that aren't in the dictionary but have entered common parlance. The council defined it as something "that cannot be found on the web with a search engine."

But Google objected, asking for changes showing the expression refers to Google searches and a disclaimer saying Google is a registered trademark. To express its displeasure, the council deleted the word from the list.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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WHEN YOU CAN'T BEAR PANDA HYPE

JUST SAYIN'

Paul Sullivan
metronews.ca

I'm not sure what it is about giant pandas.

Most of the time, they just sit there. The rest of the time they eat bamboo. Repeat.

But this week, two giant pandas are the toast of Toronto, and therefore the rest of Canada. China has loaned two of the rare bears to Canada: five years in Toronto, and then five in Calgary, and they landed at Pearson airport Monday, via FedEx.

Stephen Harper, who looks a little panda-esque himself, signed for the bears.

The rest of us will have to travel to Toronto or Calgary if we want to watch Er Shun (the girl panda) and Da Mao (the boy) just sit there and eat bamboo.

Of course, the other important panda viewing activity is watching them have sex. There are only between 1,500 and 3,000 of these bears left in the world, so whenever a pair overcomes the performance anxiety that goes with being a spectacle of international co-operation and produces a cub or cubs, there is much rejoicing.

There's even a form of pornography dedicated to encouraging pandas to get it on. It doesn't really work.

So Er Shun and Da Mao travelled 15 hours in a box to live in a zoo and get gawked at. Not a tantalizing prospect if you prefer the seclusion and serenity of the mountain forests of your natural habitat in Sichuan, China. But when you're on the Red List of Threatened Species, I suppose you should feel grateful you can still earn your bamboo by just sitting there, looking awfully cute.

So cute that Toronto hopes millions of people will line up to watch Er Shun and Da Mao just sit there, plus buy the inevitable panda spinoffs.

Of course, not everyone is enchanted by the pandamonium, especially those who think we should close all the zoos and set the animals free into the wild.

Where, I might add, it is more than likely they will be systematically poached, climate changed, overrun — and run over — into oblivion.

Any visit to a zoo these days is a depressing experience, not just because zoos are depressing places (spend some time watching morose gorillas behind glass: uplifting), but because there is literally no survival alternative for a vast array of species on display.

Zoos are, really, the last safe places for many animals. But only the cute ones — like pandas — or the interesting ones — like gorillas.

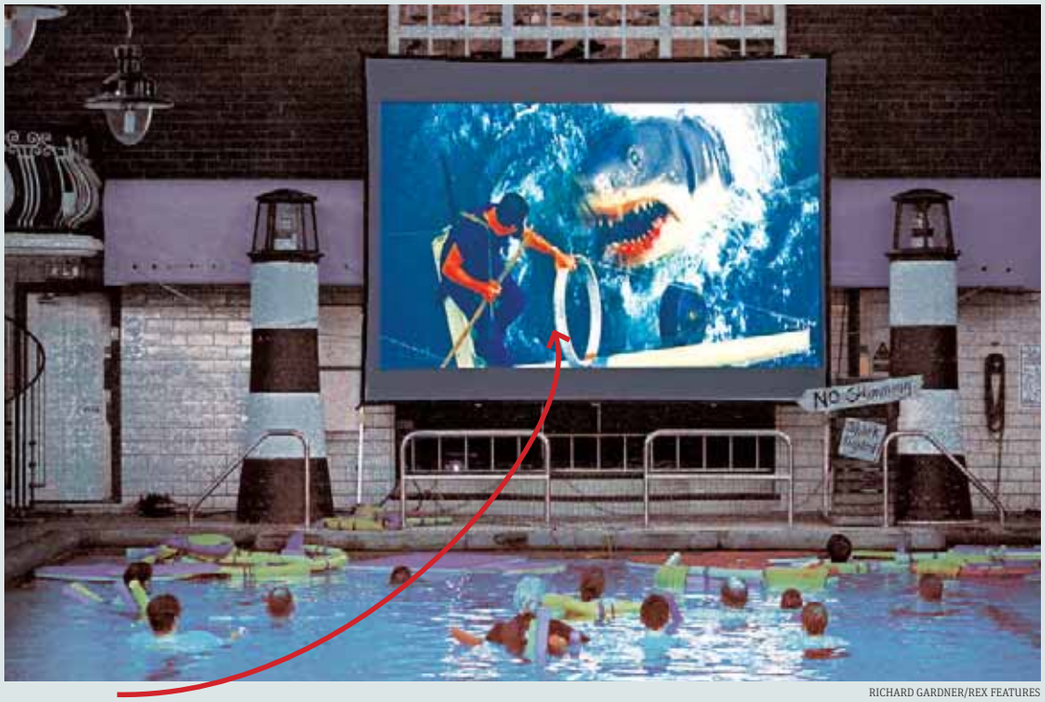
Ugly or nondescript critters just go quietly extinct without a fuss even from animal rights advocates, who have a tendency to champion the poster pandas and leave the wart hogs to fend for themselves.

If you don't believe me, I leave you with a simple number, more eloquent than I will ever be: 200.

That's the number of species, according to the UN, that are gone everyday.

ZOOM

Stop watching and start paddling



RICHARD GARDNER/REX FEATURES

Ever see a shark attack in a pool?

Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the water ... there's a shark attack on your screen. A swimming pool in Leeds, England, has been transformed into a swim-along cinema.

The temporary set up at Bramley Baths featured a large projector screen and speakers streaming the audio both under and over the water.

For Jane Earnshaw, cinema organizer and festival director of I Love West Leeds Festival, coming up with the idea of a swim-along cinema was simple.

"In the past, our festival organized pop-up cinemas in parks and housing estates," she told Metro. "I wanted to have one in a local swimming pool and I thought to myself, 'What is the most iconic water movie?' There was only one answer and it was Jaws. It was an absolute cinch." METRO WORLD NEWS

Feel like swimming?

15

swimmers took part in the event. Another 25 visitors flanked the pool's balconies to watch Jaws. Previous quirky events at the venue have included a floating orchestra and an underwater art exhibition.

Clickbait

ANDREW FIFIELD
andrew.fifield@metronews.ca

If sending a tweet is like tossing a pebble into the ocean, then these folks who re-purpose them are the heroes sifting through the silt in search of pebbles they can polish to a shine.

@pentametron:
Backed by an algorithm that searches for tweets in iambic pentameter, Pentametron gives tossed-off thoughts like "You have the morals of an alley cat," a role in a never-ending act about modern life.

@wesingyourtweet:
"You Tweet Them, We Sweet Them' is the motto of two balladeers who lend a beautiful voice to gripes about pet hair, weird Twitter non-sequiturs and life lessons learned.

Illustrated tweet of the day:
A regular feature at HelloGiggles.com offers colourfully drawn musings on topics ranging from Downton Abbey plot points to which dessert would make the best bed.

Comments

RE: How Twitter #Hashtags Are Invading Our Lives, IRL, published March 26

#sotrue I use hashtags online and verbally a lot. Especially to make a point or make a story more entertaining. For example I love to use #awkward, #romance and my all-time favourite #eyeroll!
Jen B posted to metronews.ca

RE: Tory Backbenchers Say They're Muzzled, published March 26

Is this new(s)?
Albert Ormiston posted to metronews.ca

RE: U.S. Bars Test Boundaries of Legal Marijuana, published March 26

I think what Vapor Central, a vapor lounge in Toronto, provides is a very successful model: No alcohol allowed. Like myself, many cannabis users do not drink or want to be around drinking and drunks.
MaryJane ww posted to metronews.ca

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU: Send us your comments: torontoletters@metronews.ca

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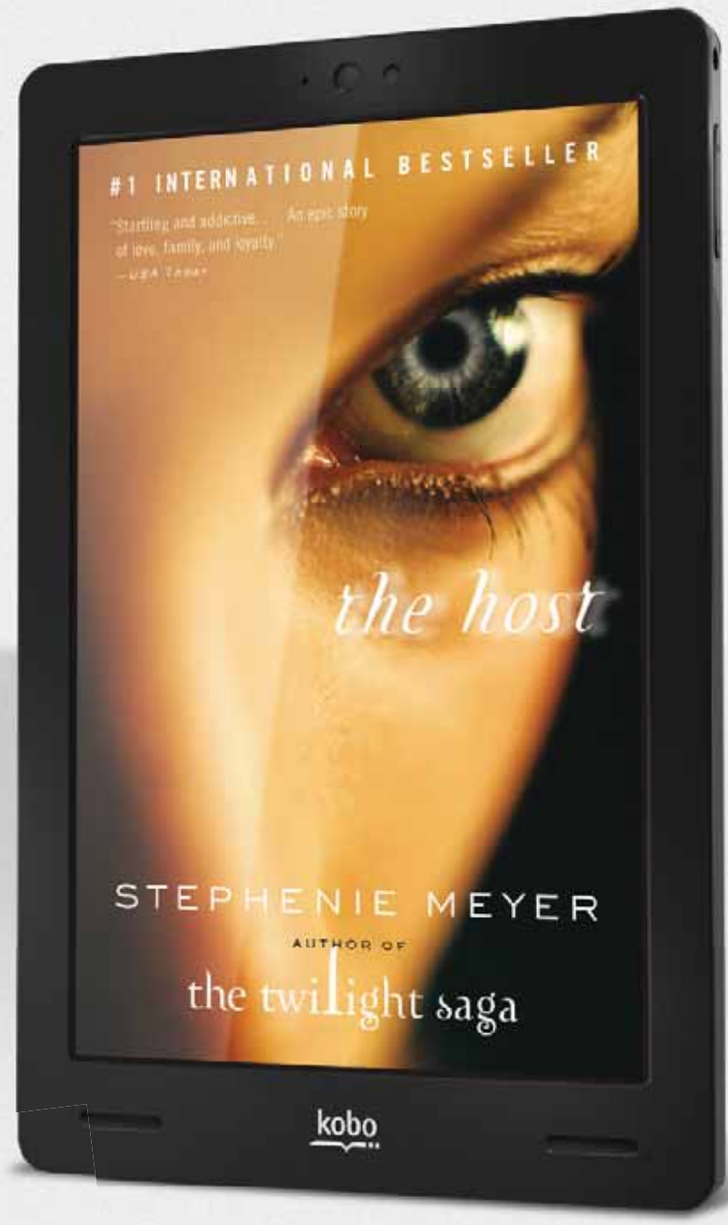

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Max Irons and Saoirse Ronan star in The Host — an alien movie from the Twilight author. ALAN MARKFIELD/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Not your typical alien movie

The Host. The latest offering from the Twilight author flips the script on what has been the standard blood bath flick

IN FOCUS
Richard Crouse
scene@metronews.ca

In The Host, the hotly anticipated new film written by Twilight scribe Stephenie Meyer, a parasitic alien is injected into the body of Melanie Stryder, played by Saoirse Ronan.

Sounds grim, but remember, this is from the lady who gave us sparkly vampires and undying love, so the alien inside is kind of a lovesick creature who helps the host body find her loved ones.

That's a lot more benign than other parasitic alien movies.

The most famous alien organism — in the movie Alien, naturally — literally burst on the screen, poking its horrible head through the chest of John Hurt in one of cinema's most indelibly creepy moments.

To get a natural reaction from his actors, director Ridley Scott didn't fully explain what was about to happen as they shot the scene.

"Everyone (on the crew) was wearing raincoats," said Sigourney Weaver. "We should have been a little suspicious."

When the alien came careening out of Hurt's body the actors were genuinely surprised.

Blood oozed all over the set and the shock was so intense it's alleged that Veronica Cartwright passed out and Yaphet Kotto was so freaked out he went to his room and wouldn't talk to anyone.

Much less bloody is The Puppet Masters, which sees the earth invaded by alien "slugs" that piggyback on people's backs, controlling their minds.

Based on the Robert A. Heinlein 1951 novel, the film starred Donald Sutherland, who also appeared in one of the genre's classics, Invasion of the Body Snatchers.

Scary movie

The shock was so intense it's alleged that Veronica Cartwright passed out and Yaphet Kotto was so freaked out he went to his room and wouldn't talk to anyone.

On the unforgettable scene in Alien

The original movie of the story, taken from Jack Finney's classic novel The Body Snatchers, dates from 1956 and has been declared by the Library of Congress as "culturally, historically, or esthetically significant," but it is the Sutherland version, from 1978, that is truly chilling.

The story of alien infiltration — humans are being replaced one by one by emotionless ETs — was called "the best film of its kind ever made" by The New Yorker's Pauline Kael and a movie that "validates the entire concept of remakes," according to Variety.

The strangest movie parasite wasn't an alien, but a bug that feeds on fear.

In the Tingler, these parasites attach themselves to their host's spine and tingle when the host is frightened or scared.

In its original 1959 run it was shown with the Percepto! gimmick that gave some of the theatre seats a small electrical jolt — or tingle — during the movie's climax.

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Keith Urban struggling to keep his fuse lit with lots on the go

New album. His Light the Fuse tour starts mid-summer but not before he lends his voice to American Idol and releases a new CD

Keith Urban's to-do list goes something like this: Provide the voice of reason on American Idol, choose and record songs for a new album, plan a tour of outdoor venues and arenas that starts this summer, co-ordinate and learn songs for an upcoming fundraiser concert, fly back and forth to London where wife Nicole Kidman is shooting a film, and carve out the right amount of time with his two young daughters.

"There's a lot of creativity happening right now," Urban said in a phone interview Monday.

"I'm also building a studio at my house, just for the heck of it. Why not? Let's do that, too. I had several meetings yesterday on a Sunday with various people, and it was like I'm choosing colour fabrics for something or other and thinking about the song I've got to cut in the studio today. Dear Lord."

American Idol

Urban's not even through his first season on the Fox network singing competition, but he already knows he'd consider doing it again if asked. He's managed to navigate early tensions between fellow judges Mariah Carey and Nicki Minaj, and says he's getting to know the real people behind the on-air personas of his fellow judges, a group that also includes Randy Jackson.

His new album

Urban never set a formal release date, but feels like he's falling behind. He plans lots of guests, so that's slowed things down as he's tried to integrate everyone's schedules. The album's release might not come until late summer.

The Light the Fuse tour, starting July 18

There may be something a little different for those who hit one of his outdoor shows starting this summer, including his first trip to the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles. "There's a chance that we'll start the tour before the album comes out," Urban said. "That's never happened before." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Keith Urban has women everywhere hanging on his every word — which is good given that he has a lot to say and do these days. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Just 'cuz she's country doesn't mean she can't talk pot

Self-assured newcomer Kacey Musgraves is on a mission to rewrite the rules in Nashville. GETTY IMAGES

Kacey Musgraves hates the genre column on iTunes. It's the label to end all labels.

The 24-year-old Texas-born singer-songwriter is the focus of Nashville this week as she releases her new album Same Trailer Different Park.

She has two songs in the Top 20 at country radio and is on tour with Kenny Chesney. By the end of that sentence, like iTunes, you probably stamped the word country on her music. That's only partially true. Everybody's finding out there's a lot more to Kacey Musgraves.

"My favourite compliment probably ever is when someone tells me, 'I don't like country music, but I like your music,'" Musgraves said. "It really stokes me out when I hear that. It's cool because I don't want to be defined by the iTunes label. So if I can just make good music that can appeal to a range of people, then I'll be happy."

So far, she's on target. Those songs, Mama's Broken Heart, written for Miranda Lambert, and her own lead single Merry Go 'Round, have stormed right on up the radio airplay charts. Even the media types who often ignore mainstream country music are on board. Rolling Stone's Jody Rosen says in a four-star review, "The album showcases a songwriting voice you won't hear anywhere else in pop: young, female, downwardly mobile, fiercely witty." And Ann Powers of indie rock-focused taste-maker NPR says it unfolds like a novel and considers it a "gift." "Pop desperately needs women artists like Musgraves — women who can tell the stories of their regular sisters and nieces and aunts and uncles and boyfriends in optimistic but realistic terms."

Musgraves sings of small-town lovable losers stuck in a loop on Merry Go 'Round and espouses smoking weed and erasing romantic gender lines in Follow Your Arrow. That's just the start. Musgraves has delivered an album meant to gently, but pointedly, jostle the status quo.

"I would love to change things about country," she said. "I think we need to be a little more accepting. If you listen to every other genre there's no issue talking about pot or homosexuality or atheism or whatever it is. But you move to our genre and you're like X'd if you bring up any of that." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Album cover

Same Trailer Different Park is the latest album from Kacey Musgraves

- **Odd ball.** The petite brunette showed up to a recent interview at an East Nashville coffeehouse that serves hipsters, without a hint of country in her wardrobe. She then proceeded to do her own hair and makeup for a shoot.

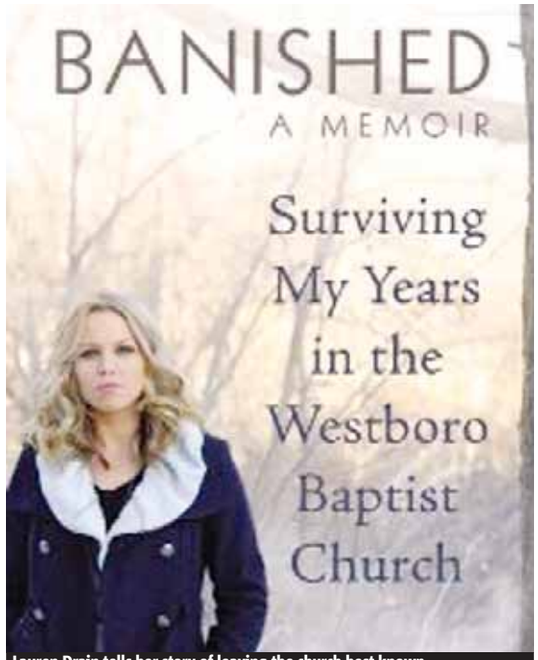
Tales from inside a notorious church

New book. Lauren Drain tells her story of how she was cut off from family, banished from Westboro Baptist Church

When Lauren Drain was 14, her father, a filmmaker, moved his family to Kansas to make a movie about the Westboro Baptist Church, the fundamentalist Christian church best known for picketing funerals. But he was soon captivated by Fred Phelps, the group's charismatic leader. The Drains joined the church, and Laura spent her teens listening to their teachings. She tells her story in a new memoir, Banished: Surviving My Years in the Westboro Baptist Church.

How did Pastor Fred Phelps operate?
"At first, he kind of had this intimidating presence. Slowly, he kind of had this charisma. It's really hard to describe. He had this grandfatherly presence. I would see how he dealt with his granddaughters — he seemed tenderhearted and to care about his family. When you see him on the picket lines or in public shouting, then you see him with his family, it's like two completely different personas. I got to see his nature with his family and thought, 'Oh, maybe he's misunderstood.' That was all in the beginning. It wasn't until later that I saw the hypocrisy."

What happened on the day you were banished from the church?
"My father told me 'you're a bad influence on the kids. I don't want you in my home anymore. Pack your bags. I'll pay for your hotel for a few days, but you need to find another place to live.' They didn't even tell me what I had done. I was begging to stay because I did not want to leave my family. They dropped me off at the hotel and said 'don't contact us, you're on your own now.'"



Lauren Drain tells her story of leaving the church best known for picketing funerals. HANDOUT

Are you in contact with your extended family?
"I was terrified of contacting my extended family. (My parents) did all these scare tactics, saying bad things would happen. My mind wasn't right for a good two years. Finally, I realized nothing bad was going to happen to me. My extended family was not evil. People are not evil. I was slowly able to assimilate and stop judging people. I think I'm a better Christian. I want to show that people can change. I am not the same person I was years ago." METRO NEW YORK

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Mad Ship careens along a journey of artistic struggle — on and off screen

Interview. The drama Mad Ship, about a man with a mad mission, took six years to bring to the screen

STEVE GOW
Metro World News

The upcoming drama Mad Ship tells the story of a struggling family that immigrates to Canada only to have their dreams dashed in the drought of the early 20th century depression. However the tragic tale could just as easily be an allegory for filmmaking in Canada.

"Anybody who wants to make films anywhere has some form of significant struggle," said star Gil Bellows, perhaps best known for his work on TV's Ally McBeal. "It's especially hard to make films when you're telling stories that may have some level of poignancy because there's that debate of the commerciality of them."

Co-written and directed by David Mortin and Patricia Fogliato, Mad Ship is proof of artistic struggle. Taking six years to bring to the screen, the film focuses on the protagonist's mad mission to build a ship and sail out of his prairie misfortune.

"The whole purpose of storytelling is, in a way, to remind audiences that they're not alone," said Bellows of the film's tragic themes. "When one is able to convey a bleak and tragic story in an effective manner, it's almost cathartic for the audience because within that story, they recognize that aspect of themselves or people that they love and it relieves them of some of the isolation."

With over 20 years of experience in Hollywood, Bellows clearly has an understanding when it comes to storytelling. This perception has even led him behind the camera where he just finished directing a dark comic thriller called Three Days in Havana.

"I sort of toyed with directing a few different times and I like it," said Bellows admitting he'll keep acting. "I look forward to having those opportunities but I'm not somebody who once they've tasted that fruit, that's the only fruit they want."

Mad Ship tells the tale of a family immigrating to Canada. HANDOUT

Quoted

"The whole purpose of storytelling is, in a way, to remind audiences that they're not alone."

Gil Bellows
On the process for making movies.

Final thoughts

A few parting words from Gil Bellows

- **Bellows on the Depression:** "It definitely represents an aspect of the dust bowl experience," said Bellows of Mad Ship. "People were struggling and families were torn apart, people were put in a position that they never imagined."
- **Bellows on playing a not-so-nice guy:** "Clearly he's not doing honourable things necessarily in the story but I wanted to get more into the feelings of why he'd do something," said Bellows. "I wanted to really show somebody that you didn't necessarily like but maybe you understood."

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James Franco lets it spill on Hathaway and Lohan

James Franco insists he and Anne Hathaway have made peace with each other after their disastrous Oscars hosting gig two years ago.

"Anne and I made up, by the way. Let's just get that on the record," Franco told Howard Stern during an interview.

"It was a really hard time after the Oscars. She wasn't mad at me, I don't think. She didn't say she was mad at me for what happened. The critics were so nasty."

The Spring Breakers star also addressed a rumour that he'd turned down an offer to sleep with Lindsay Lohan.

"I don't want to, like, brag about it. I don't know how that got out," Franco said.

James Franco.
ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Not trying to kiss and tell

"I don't want to, like, brag about it. I don't know how that got out."

James Franco
Speaking about Lindsay Lohan asking him to have sex with her.

"She was having issues even then, so you feel weird. Honestly, she was a friend. I've met a lot of people that are troubled, and sometimes you don't want to do that."

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word

Chris Brown trying to nurse his public black eye

THE WORD
Meredith Engel
scene@metronews.ca

Chris Brown was PR coached within an inch of his life before appearing on On Air With Ryan Seacrest yesterday.

How do we know?

The singer said everything that everyone wants him to say about his brutal assault of girlfriend Rihanna four years ago.

"I just tried my best to be the best man I could be over the years and just show her how remorseful and sorry I was for the incident and that time was probably the worst part of my life and being that she has and she's a wonderful person I'm eternally grateful and thankful," he said about trying to make amends with her and the world.

And as for the backlash that the two are back together?

"People are entitled to their opinions. I can't go around blaming. It's all about my responsibility and me growing up as a man," he said. "So I think now that I'm becoming older, and trying to mature in this life under the public eye at all times, I have to focus on doing the right thing and being more of a humble individual."

Liam Hemsworth and Miley Cyrus

Cyrus and Hemsworth still working out their problems

Miley Cyrus and fiancé Liam Hemsworth are reunited after his four-week visit to his native Australia, and all the speculation about their relationship status "has caused a lot of stress" for them, according to E! News.

"There are some serious problems going on, but seeing them together, they do genuinely love each other and they really do want to work it out," a source says of the ordeal.

"His trip to Australia was a way for them to figure out what they wanted to do and have time to think for themselves."

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5 Free things to do when in Amsterdam

Most of downtown Amsterdam looks like one huge open-air museum and strolling its streets costs you nothing. Renting a bike is not free, but if you want to go native, it's the only way to travel. Just watch out for the traffic and tram rails.

PHOTOS AND STORY: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The canals

Amsterdam's canals are 400 years old this year, but strolling along the waterways never gets old. The scenery includes Golden Age mansions dating to the 17th century, converted warehouses and narrow buildings that sometimes look like they're ready to topple over sideways. The ring of canals starts with the Singel, which boasts a floating flower market. Then come the Herengracht, Keizersgracht and finally the Prinsengracht. Once you've worked up a thirst pounding the cobbled sidewalks, stop off for a drink in one of the "brown cafés" — small bars named for their dark wooden interiors — along the canals or in the web of narrow alleys that interconnect them. If you visit the Red Light District (and most tourists do), you'll discover that it's also built around two historic canals.

Begijnhof

The clatter of trams and ringing of bicycle bells can be an assault on the ears, but there's a hidden oasis of peace in the heart of Amsterdam if you need a little quiet time. The Begijnhof is a small grassed courtyard surrounded by beautiful 17th- and 18th-century houses that were originally built for pious Catholic single women. It's right in the middle of town and reachable by a gateway at the end of a lane leading off one of the city's busiest shopping streets, but it is almost eerily silent. The courtyard also holds a small English Reformed Church and a Catholic chapel. If you don't manage to get into the Rijksmuseum to see Rembrandt's Night Watch, right around the corner from the Begijnhof is another hidden (and free) gem of the city, the Schuttersgalerij, or Civil Guard Gallery, of the Amsterdam Museum.

Vondelpark

The city's most famous park is just a stone's throw from Museum Square and a great place for a picnic. The 116-acre park (47 hectares) has ponds, tree-lined pathways, kids' playgrounds, an open-air theatre and cafés. You can rent inline skates, but it's mainly just a great place to lay down a blanket and sit for an hour or two watching the world go by. Look out for the Picasso sculpture of a fish in one of its meadows.

Eye

One of Amsterdam's newest landmarks is a stark, white film institute, called the EYE, perched on the northern bank of the Ij waterway. While you have to pay to take in a movie, the café and its terrace are open to all who are prepared to buy a cup of coffee or light meal and offer a front-row seat to watch barges chug along the Ij against a backdrop of the city skyline. Remember that Amsterdam, at its heart, is a busy port. Getting there is another of the city's unsung pleasures — you squeeze onto a free commuter ferry usually crammed with cyclists from behind Central Station.

Markets

Amsterdam's wealth began in its port with the merchants who bought and sold everything from tulip bulbs to spices from the East Indies. A little of that mercantile past can still be seen at the city's many markets. The most famous is the Albert Cuyp food market in the Pijp neighbourhood, which sells, as the city website puts it, everything from cheese to bicycle chains, six days a week. The prettiest is the Noordermarkt, a sort of grower's market that sets up each Saturday outside the historic Noorderkerk church, next to the Prinsengracht canal. The best flea market is at Waterloo Square every day except Sunday close to the Amstel River.

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A few pre-emptive steps can lessen the chances your suitcase ends up in Borneo while you're waiting in Hawaii.
ISTOCK

Don't languish over lost luggage

Trip tips. Losing a suitcase is a worst-case travel scenario, but you can lessen the chances your bag ends up in limbo

ON THE MOVE
Loren Christie
life@metronews.ca

A couple of years ago while travelling to attend a conference in Barcelona, the airline lost my luggage. To add to the pain, my seat mate on the plane accidentally dropped a bowl of cereal in my lap. Arriving in wet, dirty clothes with nothing to wear was a less than pleasant experience.

Unfortunately there is nothing you can do to guarantee that your luggage makes the trip but there are a few ways to minimize the risk and the potential pain.

If it's convenient to your travels, choose an airline that has a good track record in ensuring on-time arrivals of baggage. There are several websites, like dot.gov/aircconsumer, which will give you the latest statistics on how major carriers perform in this area.

When booking a flight try to make it's a direct one. The more changes, the greater the chance you or your bags could miss a connection.

Remove all old luggage tags from your suitcase before you arrive at the airport.

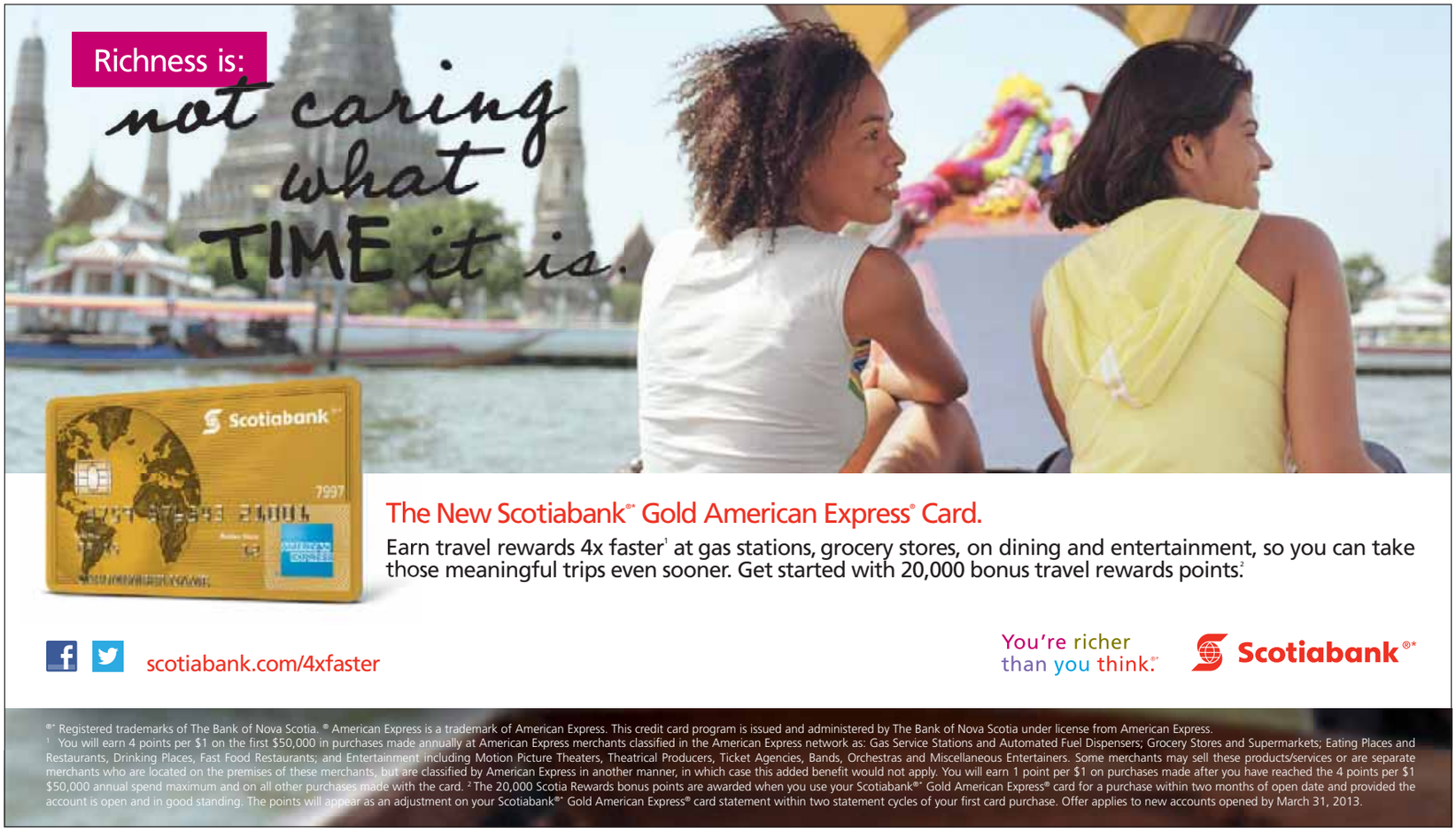
Label the bag inside and out with your contact information. By putting an address on the inside it ensures you can be reached even if your tags get ripped off. Use a work address versus your home address so any potential thieves looking for houses to target come up empty handed.

Put important items such as medications and valuables in your carry on. You will not be reimbursed for all the items in a lost piece of luggage. Airlines have a maximum that they will pay per piece of luggage, regardless of the contents.

When it comes time to fly, don't check in late. Adhere to the schedule guidelines provided by the airlines. If you are running to make a flight so is your bag.

Don't forget to hang on to your baggage claim ticket as you will definitely need it should your bag go missing.

Finally, if you are travelling with someone else consider putting a change of clothes in their suitcase. So, if you are like me and crying over spilled milk ... in your lap, you will at least have something to change into.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Hawaii's islands — where the wild things are

Wow factor. The scenic volcano views and marine life are what make a trip out in the Pacific a bucket list must

DIANE TIERNEY
life@metronews.ca

Hawaii is considered a trip of a lifetime for good reason. This paradise has wow factor everywhere you look — from fascinating creatures to fiery volcanoes.

My visit started off with meeting sea creatures. While snorkelling off a beach in Maui, I saw what looked like a volleyball stuck between two lava rocks. I reached out to get it and a long tentacle stopped me.

It wasn't a ball. It was an octopus! We blinked at each other as if to say hello and he swam away.

I could hardly believe that for the cost of a $5 snorkel set from the local Kmart, I got up close and personal with an octopus in waist-deep water. There's no need to go to the expense of scuba diving here. The sea creatures come to you.

The next day in Kona, Hawaii, while sunbathing on a beach, people around me started grabbing their cameras and pointing at the water. Huge whales were waving their tails at us from the distance.

These happy humpbacks usually hang out in Alaska, but from November to May, they vacation in Hawaii too.

If the marine life isn't enough to impress you, the volcanoes will. When I returned to our cruise ship, the NCL Pride that sails the islands year-round, we cruised past Kilauea, the most active volcano in the world.

Bright red streams of lava flowed into the ocean while sparks of fire lit up the night sky. It's a dramatic sight.

Kauai is the emerald jewel of the Hawaiian chain, thanks to being born over a plume of hot magma a million years ago. While driving through the jungle, a huge, hairy wild boar shot out of the bushes and ran across the road. It was like seeing Pumba from the Lion King come to life.

However it's Kauai's Na Pali coastline that really steals the show.

Its green velvet valleys and razor-sharp, red-earth ridges made it perfect for the movie Jurassic Park. The mystical region is mostly inaccessible by land, except by hiking a rugged 18-kilometre path.

So the best way to appreciate the dramatic 900-metre cliffs is by ship or helicopter.

Natural wonders never cease in Hawaii. Even on our last day, when we had a few hours to fill before our flight, we visited the very cosmopolitan Waikiki. We walked along the beach to take a photo of the iconic Diamond Head.

While sitting on the pier, sipping our Starbucks, sea turtles the size of coffee tables swam by. My son shook his head and summed up Hawaii in one sentence. "This place is wild," he said.

Island hopping

One of the best ways to visit Hawaii is on a cruise so you can see the most popular spots easily within a week. This will save you from paying inter-island flights and taking time-consuming ferries to see all that Hawaii has to offer. Norwegian Cruise Lines is the only cruise line to sail these islands year-round on 7-day voyages for about $1,100 per person. Visit ncl.com.

Kauai is the emerald jewel of the Hawaiian chain of islands.

Kauai's rugged Na Pali coastline is best seen from a ship or helicopter since it is mostly inaccessible by land.

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Where the rich come to play

Anguilla. This small, quiet island might be best known as the site of Brad and Jen's breakup, but it's also a golfer's paradise

BRIAN KENDALL
canadiangolftraveller.com

Even by the posh standards of a Caribbean paradise favoured by movie stars and billionaires, the whopping $26-million price tag of CuisinArt Golf Club (formerly Temenos Golf Club) in Anguilla grabbed the attention of the golf world when it opened in 2006.

Among the region's courses, only the famous Green Monkey at ultra-exclusive Sandy Lane Resort in Barbados had cost as much. Anguilla's Greg Norman-designed ocean-front beauty was the first of several high-profile courses planned for an island that had swiftly transformed itself from a dry and scrubby backwater with scant electricity and few paved roads to one of the Caribbean's most chic destinations.

Among the first to discover this tiny British protectorate on the eastern fringes of the Caribbean Sea were Hollywood movie stars and other celebrities who made a second home of a still unassuming island where crime is rare and the 33 powdery white-sand beaches are among the finest in the world.

An armada of yachts dropped anchor for Denzel Washington's 50th birthday bash. Robert De Niro was seen dining extravagantly at Blanchards, a popular restaurant. A bikini-clad Celine Dion enjoyed horseback riding on the beach. And the marriage of Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston famously suffered its last gasp in Anguilla after, so it was whispered, Aniston overheard an intimate phone conversation between her husband and Angelina Jolie.

Helping ensure the uninterrupted tranquility of both celebrities and the anonymously wealthy are by-laws banning casinos, large cruise ships, tacky souvenir shops and noisy Jet Skis. The arrival of most visitors by ferry from St. Martin further heightens the feeling of isolation. Anguilla's small airport can only handle prop planes and small jets.

Then, in 2008, came the international banking crisis, which rocked this and every other tourist destination around the world like a vengeful hurricane. Visitor arrivals on the island plunged dramatically almost overnight. Plans for new golf courses were put on hold or cancelled outright. But top Anguillan resorts such as Malliouhana and Cap Juluca managed to struggle through, and late 2009 saw the launch of Viceroy Anguilla, a 166-room bluff-top architectural stunner that captured international attention and re-invigorated the local tourism industry.

In 2011, Norman's golf course was acquired and renamed by CuisinArt Resort and Spa, which in turn rebranded itself as the CuisinArt Golf Resort and Spa. Owned by the well-known culinary appliance manufacturer of the same name, the Mediterranean-style beachfront property features an innovative hydroponic farm that provides fresh produce for the resort's four restaurants.

Golfing with ocean views, what more can you ask for? HANDOUT

CuisinArt has already made extensive improvements to the entranceway of a graceful and challenging golf course that offers breathtaking views of the turquoise Caribbean Sea and the mountains of neighbouring St. Martin beyond.

The fun starts at the par-four first hole, where the fairway descends more than 40 feet to the green. Featured prominently on this hole and throughout the course is Merrywing Salt Pond, a once stagnant local landmark that was reborn during construction. Flushing channels allow seawater to flow out of the pond, now re-stocked with bonefish, during high tide.

Norman's fairways are generous, but golfers who spray the ball will pay the penalty in roughs of packed sand and prickly underbrush.

Tougher still is playing through the gale-force trade winds almost constantly blowing from the east. On a really blustery day, holding a green on even a short par three demands the surgically precise shot making — and focused concentration — of the Great White Shark himself.

Blustery days can prove a challenge on Anguilla's courses. HANDOUT

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Lighten up Passover with simple and tasty Mandelbrot (Biscotti)

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These biscotti are phenomenal, not to mention very simple, by just using matzo cake meal and potato starch. Be sure not to use just Matzo meal.

1. Combine eggs, sugar, vanilla and oil. Add remaining ingredients (except for chocolate drizzle) and mix until well combined.

2. Form into one log and place on baking sheet lined with foil and sprayed with vegetable oil.

3. Bake at 350 F, 30 minutes.

4. Lower oven to 300 F, let cookies cool for 15 minutes, then sliced into 1-inch biscotti, lay on side, and bake another 35 minutes.

5. Drizzle: Melt chocolate and oil in microwave for 2 minutes on defrost or until chocolate begins to melt. Whisk until smooth and drizzle over biscotti.

Ingredients

- 2 eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1/3 cup oil
- 1 1/3 cups matzo cake meal
- 1/3 cup potato starch
- 3/4 cup semi sweet chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup toasted chopped pecans

Chocolate drizzle

- 3 tbsp semi sweet chocolate chips
- 1 tsp oil

This recipe makes 18 pieces. COURTESY OF ROSE REISMAN

Passover Food Facts

Here's some food info about the holiday commemorating the Exodus, the liberation of the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt in the time of Moses.

- **Yeast.** Food that contains yeast is prohibited during Passover.
- **Matzo.** Unleavened bread is a central feature of the festival. In addition, all leaven must also be removed from the house during Passover, a symbolic way of removing the "puffiness" (pride) from one's soul. Leaven includes anything made from the five major grains completely cooked within 18 minutes after coming into contact with water.

Reader's note

Not all Passover traditions are the same, so the dishes on this page may not meet all dietary requirements or restrictions.
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Does social media truly matter?

What's it to you? It's been hyped, criticized and dissected to death. So is it worth all the fuss?

JELEEN YU
TalentEgg.ca

Social media has been hailed almost unanimously as a revolutionary tool for business, and for good reason. But there's one question that has hounded it since it first came into the picture: Does social media have any "real" worth?

Yes, very much so, according to Toan Dinh, director of marketing and solutions for corporate disclosure filings research provider DisclosureNet. "Although I think it's true that many businesses still think that social media isn't a true driver of key results, I've come to know many organizations that do embrace social media as an essential part of their marketing pillars."

Social media's results "speak for themselves"

The root cause of doubt, he says, is the common perception that social media is simply a short-term marketing strategy. "Many companies are still testing the ideas of social media and haven't come to a conclusion yet. They often give up too early on social media, or that they have unrealistic expectations of how long it takes for social media to reach 'critical mass'," he explains.

Still, whether or not naysayers believe social media management to be a "real" job, Dinh believes the results speak for themselves. Having had extensive experience in hiring for digital marketing positions, he says that, in many companies, the social media team doesn't merely consist of one manager, but a whole team of social media specialists executing campaigns on a daily basis. He notes, "When social media delivers results, it is one of the highest ROI strategies in the digital marketing portfolio."

Return on investment

"When social media delivers results, it is one of the highest ROI strategies in the digital marketing portfolio."

Toan Dinh
Director of marketing and solutions

Social media is here to stay, especially when it comes to marketing. ISTOCK

It also helps that social media metrics have progressed by leaps and bounds in recent years, giving a sense of tangibility to reports on its effectiveness. Ryerson University's Ted Rogers School of Management professor Dr. Donna Smith notes that while social media research isn't really indicative of consumer purchase behaviour, it is much more refined than it used to be. "There are now sophisticated programs that have the ability to crawl the web for information. Marketers can monitor the strength of sentiment of a brand (on a scale of one to five), consumer behaviour and other factors by analyzing social media chatter or channel usage," she says.

Should social media management be Gen Y's playground?

Social media campaigns are relatively new concepts for most retail marketing divisions, with many still trying to gain a foothold into their audience's news feeds. And while corporate laws of hierarchy usually dictate that older, more experienced workers should lead new divisions, the advent of social media has pushed many Gen Y employees up the corporate ladder by way of their ease and familiarity with the medium.

While young people are admittedly more familiar with new technology, it's also true that impulsiveness and relative inexperience in marketing or public relations might make them more likely to commit a major blunder, which could cost a company a lot in terms of brand image.

On the other hand, employees with the tenure fit for higher marketing positions may not be as tech-savvy as their Gen Y counterparts, which could impact the brand's social media strategy.

A hero of the hashtags

The keyboard calls to you. Interested in a social media career? Here's some #AwesomeAdvice

JELEEN YU
TalentEgg.ca

If you're looking toward a career in social media management, it's best to start building your bridges as early as you can.

"A digital marketing background is a great place to start," says Ryerson University professor Dr. Donna Smith.

Adapting to the fast-paced, demanding and ever-changing environment of social media, marketing & solutions director Toan Dinh adds, is another thing that all potential candidates have to face. Want to get a head start on a social media management career? Here are Toan's suggestions for greatness:

Strengthen your communication skills (formally and informally)

As an official representative of a brand, a social media manager has to have clarity, accuracy and tact in communicating with customers, co-workers and the media. Focus on learning to say more with less.

Build your own personal social media channels so that you can be immersed in the industry while looking for that next opportunity

Meeting the top players before you even enter the field shows you're serious about forging a career path in the industry. Create strong connections by expressing a sincere, earnest and can-do attitude and you'll have better chances of getting your foot in the door.

Do your homework

Find ways to learn more about marketing strategies in your industry of choice

- Read books, articles and reports that explain how social media fits into corporate marketing strategies, or pick the brains of people in the know, like professionals or university instructors.

Volunteer for non-profit organizations that provide social media management opportunities

Apart from gaining valuable networking opportunities and offering your time to a worthy cause, volunteering as a social media manager will give you a feel for how the job actually works, without any pressure.

TALENTEGG.CA IS CANADA'S LEADING JOB SITE AND ONLINE CAREER RESOURCE FOR COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND RECENT GRADUATES.

Pursue a communications-type marketing position even if social media roles aren't immediately available. This can open the door to full-time work when the company wants to take their marketing strategy to the next level. ISTOCK

Instagroan: Please pause before you post

Everyone lets their hair down once in a while, just have the good sense not to share evidence of the crazier times with the entire world. ISTOCK

Twits not welcome.
A recruiter reminds us how to easily avoid a social media mess

ASHLEIGH TRAHAN
TalentEgg.ca

Before you post that picture of yourself doing body shots during your Cancun spring break, I would like to offer you some friendly advice on how potential employers might interpret your online behaviour.

You need to make sure that you are projecting the best possible image to future employers, in case anyone who's thinking about hiring you takes a quick second to Google your name. People will be assessing what you've posted to see if there are any photos, videos or all caps irrational ranting that raises a red flag about your judgment, awareness or intelligence.

A few common sense tips can ensure that you come across as employable:

Think before you tweet ... about how bad your job is

I've seen far too many catastrophes caused by careless tweets. We've all witnessed heat of the moment tweets about someone's failing love life and epic drinking plans (please, spare us), but I especially urge caution when it comes to social posts about your job.

It only takes one tweet along the lines of "This job is **** and everyone here is a ****" to get you fired.

The same applies if you decide to resign. Take a moment to reflect on how rejoicing publicly about your departure from your current boss, job or co-workers could appear. Perhaps your boss is in fact an evil fascist, and maybe your co-workers do give new meaning to the word psycho, but griping about work is never a good idea. Regardless of the situation, it can make you look like a whiner and/or jerk.

@ChangeYourName

Ditch the cheesy Twitter handle

- You should be showcasing the best possible image to potential employers and @lovemonkey1990 is sending all the wrong messages.
- Sticking to your name is safest, but if you choose to use a nickname, make it something that wouldn't make your Grandma blush.

Be truthful and consistent

Now that your social profiles (especially LinkedIn) are out there for anyone and everyone to see, you need to ensure you are telling a truthful, consistent story about yourself.

If your LinkedIn profile doesn't match up to your resumé, that will raise red flags and will quickly torpedo potential opportunities. Take the same care in putting together an online profile as you would your resumé.

Maintain your personality and use it to your professional advantage

While you might think I would advocate for being a passionless yuppie robot on your social media profiles, that's not the case. Having a life outside of work makes you an interesting, well-rounded person, so maintain your unique qualities and pursuits in full view (as long as your pursuits are of the legal variety).

Remember to take the time to post updates about news and trends related to your industry. This will work to your advantage by showcasing your knowledge and interest in your field to potential employers.

ASHLEY TRAHAN IS A TORONTO-BASED RECRUITMENT CONSULTANT. TALENTEGG.CA IS CANADA'S LEADING JOB SITE AND ONLINE CAREER RESOURCE FOR COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND RECENT GRADUATES.

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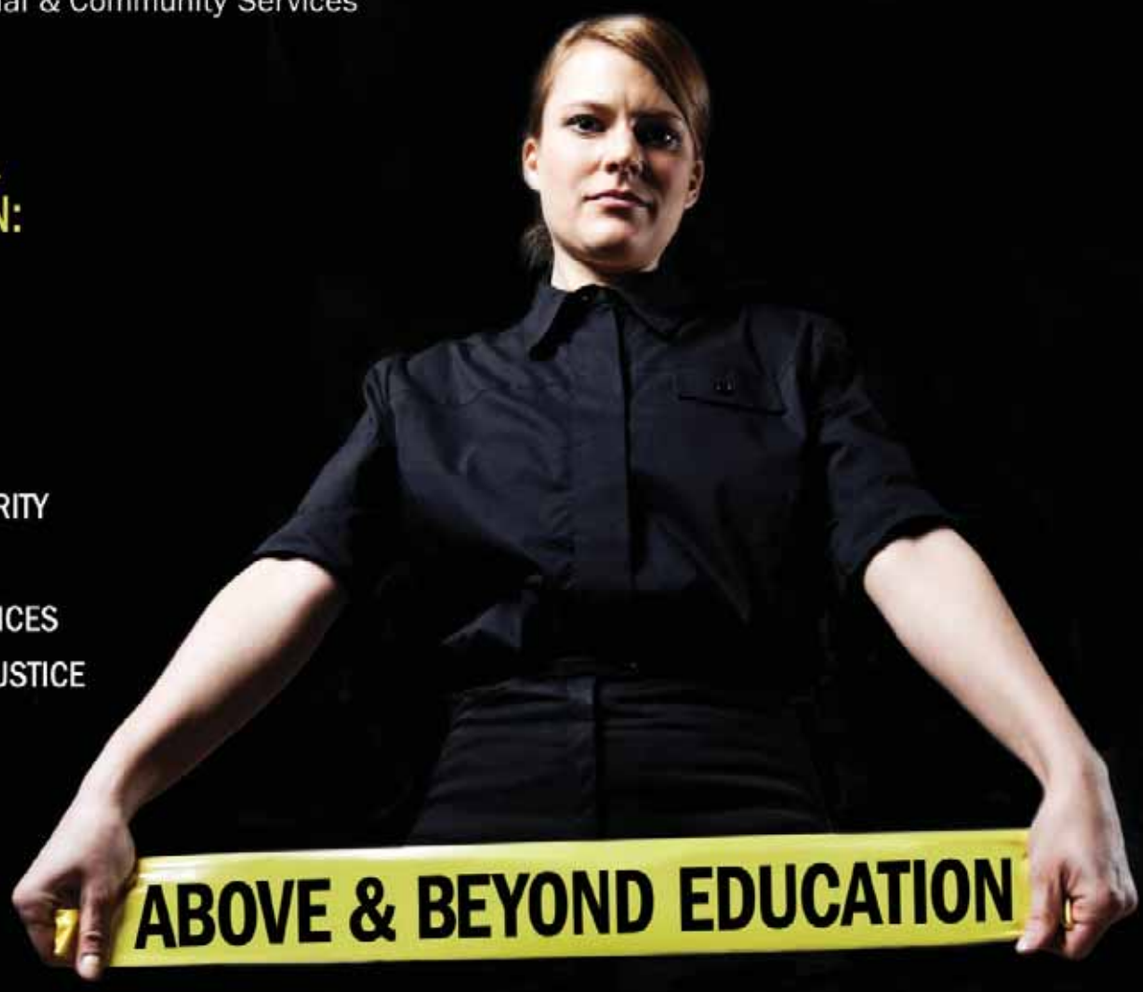

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Meet the Face behind the Book

Tweet like it's your job.
H&M Canada's main media man tells us what it takes to do his work

JELEEN YU
TalentEgg.ca

We all know that one person who seems to do nothing but post Facebook updates and tweet whatever random thought pops into mind.

(We'd be forgiven if we chose to ignore those nagging fingers pointing in our direction, too.)

But what if you could turn your aptitude with social media into a noteworthy career, one that not only puts you right where all the online action is, but gives you an opportunity to make a big difference as well?

That's exactly what Humber College grad Patrick Tackney did. Tackney first started working with his current employer, a retail clothing company, as a staff member at their flagship store in the Toronto Eaton Centre.

He slowly worked his way up the ranks, eventually holding office positions in the company's reception and travel department, and becoming a showroom assistant.

After getting his public relations diploma in 2011, Tackney had hoped to find a job working in PR. Turns out, the company that was already closest to his heart had the perfect role for him in mind.

Currently holding court as a social media manager and communications co-ordinator at H&M Canada, Tackney also notes that his job isn't just all about tweeting upcoming promos or posting pretty pictures on Facebook.

It's a serious job — one that requires deft communication skills and an extensive knowledge of, and experience with, marketing and public relations.

You won't find him complaining, though. If anything else, he was made for this job. "I've always been active in social media in my personal life and showed an interest in it. To me, it was a perfect fit."

Patrick Tackney believes that retailers not being available online these days is the equivalent of having un-manned cash registers in-store. PROVIDED

Tweeter-in-training?

What would be your advice to new grads hoping to follow a social media management career path, especially in retail?

- If you want to do work in social for a retailer, I highly suggest you work in the store first. This way you can really get to know the organization's corporate culture, and you get a really good idea of what the store is all about.

What are your responsibilities as a social media manager? What is a typical day like?
Every day is different. I oversee all of our social media planning, execution, monitoring and analysis. I also support the PR side of things, writing and editing copy, maintaining media lists, internal communications ... the list goes on!

How are you finding the job? Is it what you expected, or is the reality quite different from what you imagined?
I love my job! I work with an amazing group of people, many of whom are the best in their fields. I had a very good idea about what to expect because I had worked in this environment for some time before accepting the position.

How is your work-life balance?
I take my down time very seriously. Social media is a 24-hour job and it's so important that social media managers take time off.

What do you like best about the job?
The people I work with. I also love it when I get the chance to meet our fans and followers in real life at various events, such as a shopping event, for example. It really helps solidify the relationships we work so hard to create and maintain online. That's the key to successful social media.

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Lupul helps Maple Leafs lap Panthers in 3rd period

A scrum for the puck takes place in front of goalie Ben Scrivens during a game between the Toronto Maple Leafs and the Florida Panthers at the Air Canada Centre on Tuesday. DAVID COOPER/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

NHL. Toronto forward has six goals in four games after returning from broken forearm

Joffrey Lupul scored two third-period goals to rally the Toronto Maple Leafs to a 3-2 win over the Florida Panthers on Tuesday night.

Lupul's power-play goal 22 seconds into the third put Toronto ahead 2-1 before Florida tied it 23 seconds later when Shawn Matthias banked in the puck off the skate of Leafs defenceman Mike Kostka in front. But Lupul brought the Air Canada Centre gathering of 19,379 to its feet at 3:12 with his second of the game.

Lupul has held the hot scoring hand for Toronto with six goals in four games since returning from a broken forearm. He also scored in the Leafs' 3-2 shootout loss Monday night against Boston, giving him three goals in two games since returning from a two-game suspension.

But Toronto goaltender Ben Scrivens preserved the one-goal advantage with a fine glove save off Florida's Tyson Strachan with 7:15 remaining in the third and was solid in stopping 40 shots.

Dion Phaneuf also scored for Toronto (18-12-4), which was playing its third game in four nights. The Leafs return to action Thursday night hosting the Carolina Hurricanes.

With the win, Toronto improved to 9-6-2 at home to remain sixth in the Eastern Conference with 40 points, two behind fifth-place Ottawa. But the Leafs became the fifth team in the conference to reach the 40-point plateau.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

On Tuesday

3	2
Leafs	Panthers

Purring vs. Panthers

77/79

Ben Scrivens stopped 37 shots in Toronto's 3-0 road win over Florida on Feb. 18. After Tuesday's 40-save performance, the Leafs goalie has stopped 77 of 79 shot attempts by the Panthers this season.

Jays' Romero staying south to open season

Ricky Romero's encouraging start on Tuesday was not enough to make up for a rocky pre-season.

The Toronto Blue Jays announced that the left-hander has been optioned to single-A Dunedin of the Florida State League.

The move came shortly after Romero picked up the win in Toronto's 6-3 victory over Pittsburgh. It was considered a make-or-break start for Romero, who had a decent outing but didn't do enough to make up for his spring struggles.

Blue Jays general manager Alex Anthopoulos said the left-hander simply ran out of time to become as good as he should be to be part of the club's rotation.

"We ran out of time," Anthopoulos said. "He's working on something that he hasn't completed yet. We didn't have enough time to get him to get him to complete it."

Romero went 1-1 in five Grapefruit League starts with a 6.23 earned-run average. But his worst outing doesn't show up in the exhibition standings. Romero was lit up in a troubling minor-league start last week, allowing four runs and five walks while retiring only eight batters.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ricky Romero opened last season as Toronto's No. 1 starter, but struggled to a 9-14 record with a 5.77 ERA in 32 starts. NATHAN DENETTE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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MLB

Yankees complete deal for Wells

A trade sending outfielder Vernon Wells from the Los Angeles Angels to the New York Yankees was finalized Tuesday.

New York dealt a pair of minor leaguers to the Angels on Tuesday for Wells — outfielder Exircado Cayones and left-hander Kramer Sneed. The Angels will pay about $28.5 million of the $42 million Wells is owed over the final two seasons of his contract. The Yankees will pay most of his salary this year, a move designed to help the Angels stay under the luxury-tax threshold of $178 million.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

New Yankees outfielder Vernon Wells. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

California coronation in D.C.

Los Angeles head coach Darryl Sutter watches as U.S. President Barack Obama head-butts a soccer ball during an event to honour the 2012 seasons of the Stanley Cup champion Kings and the MLS champion Los Angeles Galaxy at the White House on Tuesday. SUSAN WALSH/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Looking out for No. 1: New Woods ad ruffles feathers

Golf. Nike says promo meant as salute to recent win, not Tiger's past marital misfortunes

Some say this Nike ad, posted all over social media sites, is inappropriate in light of Tiger Woods' past marital woes. NIKE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Maybe winning doesn't take care of everything.

Nike is causing a social media storm with its latest online ad showing a picture of Tiger Woods overlaid with a quote from him: "Winning takes care of everything."

The ad, posted on Facebook and Twitter, is supposed to allude to the fact that the golfer recovered from career stumbles to regain his world No. 1 ranking on Monday. But some say it's inappropriate in light of Woods' past marital woes. It's the latest controversy from the athletic giant.

Woods has long used the phrase — at least since 2009 — whenever reporters ask him about his or other golfers' rankings.

The ad has garnered hundreds of comments, many congratulating Woods on the ranking, but others commenting that the ad sends the wrong message in light of Woods' past problems. His five-year marriage to Elin Nordegren collapsed in 2010 after multiple affairs came to light.

Others responded on Twitter. Annie Kessler, 25, in Columbus, Ohio, tweeted that the ad was a "poor choice" for Nike. She said in an interview that she felt compelled to tweet because even though she understands why Nike would want to promote Woods, the phrase itself is inappropriate because of Woods' past infidelity.

Nike spokeswoman Beth Gast said that the ad references Woods' refrain that he competes to win.

"When asked about his goals such as getting back to number one, he has said consistently winning is the way to get there," she said in an email response to a query. "The statement references that sentiment and is a salute to his athletic performance."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
y-Miami	56	14	.800	—
x-New York	43	26	.623	12½
x-Indiana	44	27	.620	12½
x-Brooklyn	41	29	.586	15
Chicago	38	31	.551	17½
Atlanta	39	32	.549	17½
Boston	36	34	.514	20
Milwaukee	34	35	.493	21½
Philadelphia	27	43	.386	29
Toronto	26	44	.371	30
Washington	26	44	.371	30
Detroit	24	48	.333	33
Cleveland	22	47	.319	33½
Orlando	18	53	.254	38½
Charlotte	16	54	.229	40

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-San Antonio	53	17	.757	—
x-Oklahoma City	52	19	.732	1½
x-L.A. Clippers	48	22	.686	5
x-Denver	49	23	.681	5
x-Memphis	47	23	.671	6
Golden State	41	31	.569	13
Houston	39	31	.557	14
L.A. Lakers	36	35	.507	17½
Utah	35	36	.493	18½
Dallas	34	36	.486	19
Portland	33	37	.471	20
Minnesota	25	44	.362	27½
New Orleans	25	46	.352	28½
Sacramento	25	46	.352	28½
Phoenix	23	48	.324	30½

x — clinched playoff berth; y — clinched division.

Tuesday's results

New York 100 Boston 85
Minnesota 105 Detroit 82
L.A. Clippers at Dallas

Wednesday's games — All Times Eastern

Milwaukee at Philadelphia, 7 p.m.
Atlanta at Toronto, 7 p.m.
Boston at Cleveland, 7 p.m.
Orlando at Charlotte, 7 p.m.
Memphis at New York, 7:30 p.m.
Washington at Oklahoma City, 8 p.m.
Indiana at Houston, 8 p.m.
Miami at Chicago, 8 p.m.
L.A. Lakers at Minnesota, 8 p.m.
L.A. Clippers at New Orleans, 8 p.m.
Denver at San Antonio, 8:30 p.m.
Phoenix at Utah, 9 p.m.
Brooklyn at Portland, 10:30 p.m.
Sacramento at Golden State, 10:30 p.m.

NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE

ATLANTIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Pittsburgh	34	26	8	0	117	84	52
New Jersey	33	15	11	7	82	89	37
NY Rangers	32	16	13	3	78	78	35
NY Islanders	33	15	15	3	96	107	33
Philadelphia	32	13	17	2	84	99	28

NORTHEAST DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Boston	31	21	7	3	89	66	45
Montreal	32	20	7	5	98	78	45
Ottawa	33	18	9	6	86	72	42
Toronto	34	18	13	3	102	97	39
Buffalo	33	13	16	4	87	102	30

SOUTHEAST DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Winnipeg	34	18	14	2	88	99	38
Carolina	31	15	14	2	86	90	32
Washington	33	15	17	1	94	93	31
Tampa Bay	33	14	18	1	105	99	29
Florida	34	9	19	6	80	119	24

WESTERN CONFERENCE

CENTRAL DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Chicago	31	24	4	3	106	71	51
Detroit	33	17	11	5	90	83	39
St. Louis	31	17	12	2	92	86	36
Nashville	33	14	13	6	83	88	34
Columbus	32	13	13	6	75	85	32

NORTHWEST DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Minnesota	31	19	10	2	86	75	40
Vancouver	32	17	9	6	87	85	40
Edmonton	31	11	13	7	74	91	29
Calgary	30	12	14	4	85	103	28
Colorado	31	11	16	4	79	100	26

PACIFIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Anaheim	32	22	6	4	104	83	48
Los Angeles	32	18	12	2	93	80	38
San Jose	31	14	11	6	76	82	34
Dallas	32	15	14	3	87	97	33
Phoenix	32	13	15	4	82	90	30

Note: A team winning in overtime or shootout is credited with two points and a victory in the W column; the team losing in overtime or shootout receives one point which is registered in the OL (other loss) column.

Tuesday's results

N.Y. Islanders 3 Washington 2
N.Y Rangers 5 Philadelphia 2
Pittsburgh 1 Montreal 0
Tampa Bay 2 Buffalo 1
Toronto 3 Florida 2
Winnipeg 4 Carolina 1
Edmonton at St. Louis
Calgary at Chicago
Columbus at Vancouver

Monday's results

Boston 3 Toronto 2
Detroit 3 Phoenix 2
Los Angeles 5 Chicago 4
Minnesota 7 Dallas 4
Nashville 3 Edmonton 2
Ottawa 3 New Jersey 2 (SO)
San Jose 5 Anaheim 3

Wednesday's games

All Times Eastern

Montreal at Boston, 7:30 p.m.
Phoenix at Minnesota, 9 p.m.
Colorado at Calgary, 10 p.m.
Anaheim at San Jose, 10 p.m.

SCORING LEADERS

	G	A	Pt
Crosby, Pgh	14	39	53
Stamkos, TB	22	19	41
Kunitz, Pgh	19	22	41
St-Louis, TB	7	33	40
Kane, Chi	17	22	39
Getzlaf, Ana	12	25	37
Staal, Car	14	21	35
Kadri, Tor	14	21	35
Datsyuk, Det	11	24	35
Tavares, NYI	19	15	34
Ribeiro, Wash	10	24	34
Vanek, Buf	16	17	33
Moulson, NYI	11	22	33
Toews, Chi	16	16	32
Ladd, Wpg	14	18	32
Voracek, Pha	13	19	32
Duchene, Col	12	20	32
Zetterberg, Det	8	24	32
Ovechkin, Wash	16	15	31
Parenteau, Col	14	17	31
Neal, Phg	17	13	30
Kopitar, LA	10	20	30
Kessel, Tor	10	20	30
Semin, Car	8	22	30

Not including Tuesday's games

Davis Cup tennis

Canada sticks with winning formula for clash with Italy

Canada hopes that the same players who upset Spain two months ago can do it again against Italy in the Davis Cup quarter-finals.

Milos Raonic will lead Canada into the April 5-7 series in Vancouver joined by Frank Dancevic and Vasek Pospisil and Daniel Nestor, Tennis Canada announced Tuesday.

They will be up against an Italian squad similar in strength to the No. 1-ranked Spanish side they beat 3-2 in February minus Rafael Nadal and David Ferrer.

"The Italians have good depth as a country," Davis Cup captain Martin Laurendeau said on a conference call. "The Spanish team in Vancouver and the Italian team we find are similar enough that we can plan accordingly." THE CANADIAN PRESS

UFC 158. Diaz challenges St-Pierre's weight after pre-fight video surfaces

Nick Diaz's camp is alleging improprieties surrounding the UFC 158 weigh-in and drug testing.

The California welterweight lost a five-round decision to champion Georges St-Pierre on March 16 at Montreal's Bell Centre.

Since then, a video shot backstage at the weigh-in has raised questions about the Quebec athletic commission (Régie des Alcools des Courses et des Jeux), showing that it treats 170.9 pounds the same as 170.

Diaz was announced at 169 pounds at the weigh-in while St-Pierre was 170 — the welterweight limit.

The Diaz camp suggests the champion's exact weight may never be known.

"In the circumstances, Mr. St-Pierre remains legally and ethically obligated to fight Mr. Diaz at 170 pounds or else vacate the belt in favour of those prepared to fight at welterweight," Jonathan Tweedale, a Vancouver lawyer for the Diaz camp, said in a statement.

Traditionally fighters are given an extra pound at weigh-ins. So a welterweight can weigh in at 171 pounds, one above the limit. But that extra pound is not allowed in the case of championship bouts.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Georges St-Pierre holds ice to his head after fighting Nick Diaz at UFC 158 in Montreal on March 16. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Toronto's Nick Wiggins, left, and Burlington's Chadrack Lufile celebrate Wichita State's upset win over the Gonzaga Bulldogs in the third round of the men's NCAA basketball tournament on Saturday in Salt Lake City, Utah. The two formed a life-long bond while playing in the United States' junior college system. STREETER LECKA/GETTY IMAGES

Canadian Shockers living the dream at March Madness

NCAA Tournament. Wiggins, Lufile lead the Wichita State charge into Sweet 16

When the final buzzer sounded on Wichita State's upset victory over No. 1 seed Gonzaga in Salt Lake City last weekend, the Shockers broke out in a dance circle on the floor. At its centre were Canadians Nick Wiggins and Chadrack Lufile.

It was a celebration of not only the biggest upset of March Madness, but of a strong bond that helped propel the best friends to such lofty hoops heights.

"It was really a dream come true," Lufile, the junior forward from Burlington, Ont., said.

No. 9-seed Wichita State advanced to the NCAA basketball tournament's Sweet 16 by defeating eighth-seeded Pittsburgh and then ousted the Zags — including Canadians Kelly Olynyk and Kevin Pangos — on Saturday.

The Shockers now find themselves in position to make a run at the Final Four.

It would be another remarkable feat for Wiggins, a Toronto native, and Lufile, Canadians who became best friends and each other's biggest supporters back when they were just trying to find their way to the NCAA in the junior college system at Vincennes of Illinois.

"Ever since the first day I met him, we just motivated each other, we talked about each other's dreams and what we needed to do to be successful — two Canadians from the same place, we had to pick each other up," Lufile said

The two 22-year-olds split up after Vincennes, playing a season at separate junior colleges, but continued to support each other through rough patches.

The Shockers (28-8) take on No. 13 seed La Salle on Thursday in Los Angeles, and then would face either Arizona or Ohio State in the Elite Eight.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Big man on campus

Nick Wiggins is the older brother of high-school phenom Andrew, who is expected to be a top pick in the 2014 NBA draft.

- On Monday, Nick became the centre of attention when he walked into class to a standing ovation. "It's been pretty crazy," he said

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Nothing old-fashioned about new Jeep

ALL PHOTOS WHEELBASE

2014 Jeep Grand Cherokee

- **Type.** Four-door, front-wheel-drive compact sedan
- **Engines (hp).** 3.6-litre DOHC V6 (290); 5.7-litre OHV V8 (370); 3.0-litre DOHC V6 turbo-diesel (240)
- **Transmissions.** Eight-speed automatic
- **Base price (including destination).** $41,600

4X4

The Grand Cherokee continues with three different 4x4 systems: single-speed Quadra-Trac I; Quadra-Trac II with a two-speed transfer case (low range for severe off-roading); and Quadra-Drive II that can direct torque to a single tire instead of just front to back.

Engine

For 2014 an all-new V6 turbo-diesel comes on-stream. Although it has the same 3.0-litre displacement offered on the 2007/08 GC (that was sourced from Mercedes-Benz), the new version is built by an Italian supplier, which is understandable given Fiat's dominating control of Chrysler. Its 240 horsepower and 420 pound-feet of torque trump the previous 215/376 ratings.

Jeep is reinforcing its new cleaned-up turbo-diesel by labelling it the "EcoDiesel." Maintaining its clean bill of health involves the injection of a substance known as urea into a chamber just ahead of the muffler. The organic-based compound reacts with and neutralizes the engine's nitrogen oxide gasses. It then burns off the remaining soot and expels what little is left. The 30-litre urea reservoir should last for about 16,000 kilometres before requiring a $50 to $60 top-up.

Transmission

The other component added to the EcoDiesel mix is an eight-speed automatic transmission. In fact, all Grand Cherokee power plants will be connected to the new gear changer. Jeep says it provides quicker acceleration, smoother shifting and improved fuel economy. The rear-wheel-drive EcoDiesel GC is rated at 10.3 l/100 km city and 7.1 highway. By comparison, the base gasoline 3.6 earns a 12.3/7.9 rating.

Review. Is it a case of 'adapt or die,' or is it just along for a high-tech ride?

MALCOLM GUNN
wheelbasemedia.com

Sport utility vehicles might be fading from the automotive landscape, but at least a couple of Chrysler's Jeep-branded models tenaciously hold firm to the go-anywhere concept.

Of course Jeep's warrior-inspired Wrangler is the group's undisputed icon, but there's certainly nothing old-fashioned about the updated Grand Cherokee that's now rolling off the assembly lines. The new 2014 model shows a freshly scrubbed face plus some major adjustments under the hood.

The current-generation GC that arrived for the 2010 model year was a hit right out of the gate with stylish looks, sure-footed suspension and a smooth-running 290-horsepower V6 engine. The 360- and 470-horsepower "Hemi" V8 options (the latter attached to the super-swift SRT model) have added considerable performance luster to the lineup, but it's the fuel-efficient V6 that has contributed the most to the GC's continuing popularity.

Opting for the EcoDiesel adds $5,000 to the $56,600 price tag of the Grand Cherokee Overland (the base 3.6 Laredo starts at $41,600). Factor in the extra cost of diesel fuel, and the EcoDiesel upgrade doesn't seem quite so tempting.

But the 3,265-kilogram tow rating matches the 5.7-litre V8's while providing a 550-kilogram advantage over the gas V6 models. And the estimated 1,170 maximum cruising range might persuade buyers to seriously consider the extra expenditure.

Returning is Jeep's available air suspension with five separate height settings, along with Selec-Terrain that allows the driver to adjust the 4x4 and height/transmission settings for sand, mud, snow, rock or sport. The latter reduces the degree of traction control, lowers the ride height and directs extra torque to the rear wheels.

The physical improvements and expanded engine lineup make the Grand Cherokee a more complete package and an exemplary member of the dwindling sport ute fraternity.

Diesel dilemma: Going nowhere fast

Autoknow. Audi A5 coupe is the perfect car to prove that diesels are, in fact, for real

JEFF MELNYCHUK
wheelbasemedia.com

What does Europe know that we don't when it comes to diesels? Perhaps when our gas price doubles, 20 per cent fuel savings will mean more. ALL PHOTOS WHEELBASE MEDIA

It's usually tough to act all cool when you're driving a diesel, but this isn't any ordinary diesel.

Although the diesel is peppy around town, the fact that its rev ceiling is only about 4,500 rpm means you are rowing the six-speed manual transmission a lot. One strategy is to keep one gear ahead of where you would need to be with a gas engine. Just lug the engine in fourth instead of winding it out in third, for example.

Chevrolet is doing it with the Cruze and Mazda is going to do it with the new Mazda6. Of course, Volkswagen has been doing it forever, while the Jeep Grand Cherokee is going to get back into it.

"It," of course, refers to diesel engines, which have been a no-brainer in Europe for decades.

And then there's this car. Walter de'Silvia once said it's the most beautiful car he has ever designed. He should know all about that, since he heads up the styling department at Audi.

And the gleaming blue A5 coupe sure looks like a sports car with two doors, six-speed manual transmission and 19-inch wheels. The base engine is a stout gasoline V6 with 265 horsepower. There's a supercharged model, called the S5, with about 60 more horsepower. Both have Quattro all-wheel-drive. But this ... is different. It's an A5 sports car with a diesel engine.

Of course it's not available in North America — yet — but it is available in Europe. And a fast drive on an unlimited-speed section of the German Autobahn is just the ticket to confirm this two-door's claim as a true sports machine. Out here, looking the part just isn't going to cut it, especially when nearly every other car is a BMW or a Mercedes-Benz driving in the fast lane.

The A5's 220-horsepower 3.0-litre diesel engine is a new strain of diesel with a combination of civil driving characteristics, outstanding torque (more than 400 pound-feet from a small V6, which is nearly double that of the gas V6) and a projected average fuel economy in the 5.5-l/100-km range.

In terms of performance, Audi's numbers are 5.9 seconds for the sprint to 96 km/h and a top speed of 248 km/h, 0.2 seconds quicker and 50 km/h faster than the base gas V6. Wow.

Largely absent from North American roads, thrifty diesels are immensely popular in Europe, where fuel costs significantly more. At home in Canada, diesels are relegated to strong-man work, sometimes deemed too uncouth for much of anything else. But a new-generation diesel is upon us that uses cleaner fuel while filtering out the black grime that used to be synonymous with diesel ownership.

But a sports car? It's the perfect vehicle to prove that diesels are, in fact, for real. Audi also has sound logic for its development of diesel engines: the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency predicts that 500 million barrels of crude oil could be saved every year in the United States alone if just one third of all vehicles were diesel powered. While about half of European vehicles are equipped with diesels, in North America that number plunges into single-digit territory.

So, here we are just outside of Munich, Germany, on a sunny spring day with the Alps carving a distinct-but-random path across the horizon.

Despite what you might have heard about the quietness of new-generation diesels, you can still tell this A5 has a diesel, although at idle it's as quiet as any gas engine. Winging the throttle reveals a slight ticking, like a loud cat purring, at the lower end of the rev range, but nothing offensive.

A small hint of turbo lag — the time it takes for the turbocharger to build boost pressure and thus power — is present, but then an exhilarating rush of torque has you on your way. But almost immediately, you have to shift. Yes, probably the most obvious adjustment to your driving style, especially in a sports car, is learning to short-shift the diesel — which means to shift much sooner than you're used to.

For example, the gas V8 in the Audi RS5 pulls past 8,000 revs. The diesel? A whopping 4,500. So, you spend much more time shifting up and down when you drive a diesel sports car because the time spent in any gear is minimized by the very narrow rev range. The A5 diesel would no doubt be quicker to 96 km/h than Audi's claim of 5.2 if the driver didn't have to go through so many shifts to get there.

On the plus side, the engine is only running at 4,200 revs or so at the maximum speed, which we can verify to be 248 km/h, or slightly better, as shown on the speedometer. At that rate, the A5 is gobbling up a football field every 1.3 seconds and the Alps are filling the windscreen in a hurry.

The big leap of faith to drop the engine into the A5 here is, of course, whether you'll buy one over a gasoline-powered model. That's the million-dollar question. Diesel technology is more money and the fuel costs more, weighed against the intangible of somewhat better fuel efficiency.

Will diesel fly? If it can fly like this on the Autobahn, then it just might have a chance.

JEFF MELNYCHUK IS WHEELBASE MEDIA'S MANAGING EDITOR. HE CAN BE REACHED ON THE WEB AT WHEELBASEMEDIA.COM BY CLICKING THE CONTACT LINK. WHEELBASE SUPPLIES AUTOMOTIVE NEWS AND FEATURES TO NEWSPAPERS ACROSS NORTH AMERICA

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Used CC: Sensible style and luxury

Second Gear.
2009 to 2012
Volkswagen Passat CC

JUSTIN PRITCHARD
drive@metronews.ca

SUBMITTED

Bringing Volkswagen's presence into the world of so-called four-door coupes, the VW Passat CC packed four doors onto a low-slung, sleek body that wouldn't look out of place on a sports coupe. Designed for elegance and an upscale, sophisticated look, the Passat CC was an affordable head-turner packed full of premium features. Note that the Passat was also available in a more traditional sedan or station wagon model for shoppers requiring something more mainstream.

Common Issues

Triple-check all interior electronics, including the windows, motorized seats, sunroof and stereo/navigation system.

Ensure the engine operates smoothly at idle, and at light, moderate and full throttle while driving. Hesitation or "lumpy" power delivery, possibly accompanied by a check-engine light, could be the result of one or more faulty ignition coil packs, which power the vehicle's spark plugs. VW's ignition coil packs are well known to be failure-prone, though they're relatively inexpensive and simple to fix.

Shifting issues on a model with the DSG transmission could be caused by a faulty mechatronics unit, which controls the advanced gearbox. Opt for a model with the manual transmission to be safe, where possible.

The available 3.6-litre V6 engine had numerous well-documented examples of engine failure in earlier Passat models, though it's relatively unclear if the issue (failure of a bolt within the engine) had been fixed by the time the CC rolled around. Opt for a four-cylinder model where possible.

Engines

Power came from a 2-litre turbocharged four-cylinder engine with 200 horsepower, or a 3.6-litre V6 with 280. The four-cylinder model came in front-wheel drive only, and with DSG or manual transmission choices. The V6 could be teamed only with a six-speed automatic and all wheel drive.

What owners like

CC owners rave about a comfortable interior, plenty of creature comforts, a high-dollar feel and smooth, quiet ride. A sense of pride, expensive looks and styling are also highly rated, and most owners say performance is more than adequate.

What owners dislike

Some owners wish for more rear-seat room, better outward visibility and a fully-functional moonroof, as the factory unit only tilts and doesn't slide. Taller drivers may wish for more headroom.

Verdict

For low running costs and higher potential reliability, a four-cylinder model with the manual transmission is your best bet. A well-maintained model should provide access to a driving experience with higher-than-average levels of refinement and enjoyment relative to its price.

Parking meters are a window into the soul

Auto Pilot. What your parking meter usage reveals about you

AUTO PILOT
Mike Goetz
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A parking meter is not just a device to pay for street parking. How a person uses or doesn't use a parking meter says a lot about them.

If you find yourself drunk and sawing the heads off parking meters, like Paul Newman's character did in the movie Cool Hand Luke, it probably says you should back off the booze a bit.

Otherwise, it might be about how much risk you're willing to take. My friend Bob and I usually take turns driving to our downtown badminton club. There's pay-enforced street parking until 9 p.m. If he drives and it's 8:45 p.m., he doesn't think twice about rolling the dice with the parking meter police.

When I'm driving, I always make sure I'm paid up until 9 p.m. I don't like gambling of any kind. So there's that, and the fact that during one bad spell I got so many parking meter-related tickets out of carelessness that I gave up.

I pay even if it's just a minute to run in for coffee. I overpay even. The parking meter people won. They beat me down like a pack of young boys in a circle trying to kill a snake in long grass, with shovels.

Another badminton mate, Robert, goes a bit out of his way to find non-metered (and free) parking. He does this not because he's cheap, but because he's principled. He can't abide the reality that he could drive his car continuously on the streets 24/7, but the second he stops on the side of the road he has to pay.

He reasons it's the same piece of pavement, as a taxpayer, that he has already paid for. He's got a point, and it got me thinking about a new use for self-driving vehicles — as drones to make sure you never have to stop for pay-enforced parking.

Nothing enrages people like that yellow parking ticket under the wipers. People fight parking tickets with the energy, vehemence and resolve usually reserved for toppling corrupt regimes. This could reveal that you have untapped reserves of chutzpah. Or that you should be chilling out a bit more ... maybe try pilates.

At this point, wanna joke about a parking ticket? No. Fine. Apparently that's an actual joke about a parking ticket.

See, even the jokes about parking tickets suck. Parking tickets are not cool.

Parking meter fun facts!

- In 1960, New York City hired its first crew of meter maids — all women. The first man was hired in 1967.
- Chicago has North America's highest downtown parking meter rates — $6.50 per hour.

Parking meters are seemingly banal, but oh-so telling. ISTOCK

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2013 IIHS TOP SAFETY PICK

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Team ready to roll in Eco-Marathon

Energy-efficiency. Students to race their automotive inventions powered by various fuels and battery systems in Houston

Toronto to Wawa — about 900 kilometres — on a litre of gasoline may seem impossible.

Not to the University of Toronto's Supermileage team, as engineering students aim to get just that kind of mileage at Shell's Eco-Marathon Americas in Houston, April 5 to 7.

The seventh annual Eco-Marathon, held in the Americas, Europe and Asia, challenges university, college, and high school students around the globe to design, build and run their energy-efficient automotive inventions powered by various fuels and battery systems.

Going the furthest on the least amount of energy is the goal. Entrants are awarded in categories that include ingenuity in eco-design, safety and technical features as well as for their perseverance and team spirit.

A record was set last year when the Mater Dei High School team from Evansville, Indiana got the equivalent of 880 km/litre with their motorized prototype.

These U of T engineering students have worked together the past 18 months planning to raise the fuel efficiency bar even higher with their entry: Journey 1.

Powered by a 1.3 hp, custom fuel-injected Honda leaf blower motor, with their own carbon fibre designed body on an aluminum tube frame and chassis that all weighs less than 45 kilos (100 pounds), Journey 1's team members are confident their vehicle will easily maintain the minimum required competition speed of 24 km/h, and even hit 35.

It's the first year Toronto's U of T students have entered the contest, which Quebec's Université Laval has won three times, and they are up to the challenge.

"A lot of teams have a previous year's car to work on, their benchmark, but we've had absolutely nothing to work off of. We had to start from scratch," said Jonathan Hamway, one of the Supermileage team's senior members, all of whom are working on internship jobs during a gap period between their third and fourth year of engineering studies.

"I was excited to join the design team because I'm really into cars," said first-year student Tabish Gilani, one of the eight-member group's youngest participants. "I've really learned a lot working in a team that has a common goal."

Involving both younger and older students is the key to establishing a solid foundation. "The best way to do that is by building with junior students who will keep the torch going," said David Sinton, a U of T mechanical engineering professor and director of the school's Institute for Sustainable Energy.

From left, Michael Stranges, Tabish Gilani, Monika Torio, Jonathan Hamway and Kunal Taneja are five of the eight Supermileage team members heading to compete in the Shell Eco-Marathon Americas race in Houston from April 5 to 7. HENRY STANCU/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

"This is a real opportunity to contribute to the technology. Not only are they getting leadership experience but they also interact with some very important companies (in their current internships). This project is on their own time, so they've all taken on the extra workload. These guys are busy," Sinton added.

The littlest "guy" on the design team is petite Monika Torio, who has the job of piloting Journey 1, thanks to her fuel-efficient four-foot-something stature. And she's "pumped" for the Texas track.

"At first I was a little nervous about getting into something we've never done before, but building this car, being part of the team and seeing how committed we all are is really inspiring," she said as the Supermileage team unveiled the nearly completed Journey 1 outside the U of T's Institute for Aerospace Studies (UTIAS) in Toronto on March 21.

The eco-marathon course is nearly a kilometre on city streets circling the 12-acre Discovery Green Park in downtown Houston. The teams from Brazil, Canada, Guatemala, Mexico and the U.S. must complete 10 laps.

"New records are being set each year and I'm rooting for a Canadian team to bring home the top prize again," said Lorraine Mitchelmore, president and chair of Shell Canada.

This year a record number of seven Canadian university groups from Halifax to Vancouver will be competing against more than 140 teams from across the Americas.

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Towing is a numbers game

When it comes to trucks, the number you're most likely to hear advertised is the towing capacity. It's important to understand this number if you're planning on towing with a truck, SUV or even a car, because it's far more than just what the vehicle can pull.

Some of the heavy-duty trucks are being advertised with extremely high numbers, but while they're just bragging rights for some owners, others really do need the capacity.

"There are customers looking for this," says Michael Cairns, vehicle line executive for Chrysler's Ram truck division, which currently advertises a high of 30,000 pounds. "To do that (otherwise), they'd need a Class 6 or 7 truck, which is $150,000. If we can provide a pickup truck that provides that capability, that's an incredible savings."

Restrictions

- Most provinces have restrictions on how much weight you can tow on a basic driver's license. Check before you buy a trailer or hitch one up to avoid risking a fine.

Towing capacity isn't an exact science. It's affected by the type of trailer and the hitch used, the engine size and the axle ratio.

It's closely related to payload, which is how much the truck can carry, and both of those are tied in to the Gross Vehicle Weight Rating, or GVWR. That's the maximum weight of everything — the truck and what's in it (including people and the fuel in the tank), and the trailer and what's on it.

Any extra weight on the truck will count toward that GVWR, including such things as a four-door cab or four-wheel drive. In many cases, the trucks with the highest tow ratings are regular cabs with two-wheel drive.

There are several reasons for staying within your truck's recommended capacity, the most important being safety. An overloaded truck won't have the same braking ability and it won't steer properly.

Overloading will also cause premature wear to the brakes and steering components, as well as to the tires, and put excess strain on the transmission.

JIL MCINTOSH/METRO

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For pets sake, everyone should buckle up

Driving Force. Your pet can become a deadly projectile in an accident, so keep them restrained

JIL MCINTOSH
drive@metronews.ca

You wouldn't drive even a few blocks without buckling up your children, but what about your pets? Letting them ride unrestrained can pose a serious danger to the pet, to people in the car and even to first responders if something happens and you need help.

Pets are safest when tethered in the rear seat, says Christina Selter, editor at safety advocacy group BarkBuckleUP. "They can sit down or move around, but they can't fall off the seat, and they can't get out of the vehicle," she says.

Your steering wheel and dash contain airbags that can deploy at 300 km/h in a crash. If your dog is on your lap, the airbag will kill it. It will also slam the animal into your abdomen, causing internal injuries. It's also distracting to drive with a pet on your lap, and your steering ability is severely limited, especially in emergency situations.

If your pet gets behind the brake pedal — a favourite spot for cats — you'll cause serious injury when you hit the brakes, and you won't be able to stop safely.

As well, an unrestrained animal can fly through the car with deadly force. Selter says that if you crash at just 56 km/h, your 27 kg dog will become a 1,224 kg projectile that can seriously injure or even kill human passengers.

Your dog could become territorial with first responders, preventing them from helping you, or your frightened pet could bolt from the car if someone opens the door. This could result in the animal being run over, or even cause another collision as drivers try to avoid it.

Pet stores sell harnesses that secure to the car's seat belts (never buckle them in with a collar), but make sure the leash is short enough that the animal can't tumble off the seat. If you use a carrier, secure it with a seat belt so it doesn't bang around in a crash.

"Pets will get used to a travel safety product," Selter says. "Let them wear it around the house and praise them for wearing it. Do short rides at first, until they are used to whatever product you choose to use. Also, pick something that is easy for you. Most people don't use a product because it isn't easy, so find one you like."

More pet -safety tips

- Don't restrain your dog with a thin-strapped walking harness. Travel harnesses have wider straps, which help to avoid internal injuries.
- A pet can sustain fractures just by falling off the seat when you hit the brakes.
- Never let your dog ride in an open pickup truck bed, where even a fender-bender could be fatal.

BarkBuckleUP says it's best to tether pets in the rear seat. BARKBUCLEUP

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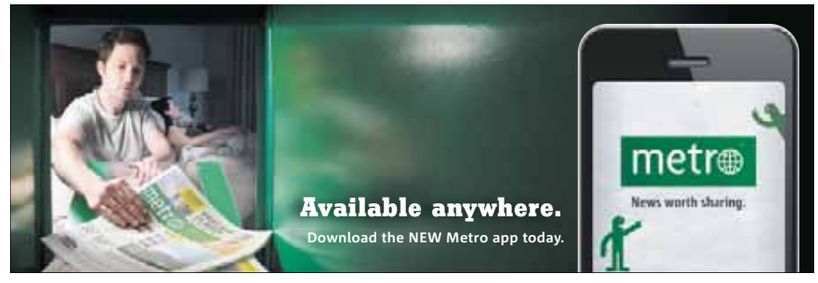

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Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
There is no point trying to convince people who don't want to be convinced. The only way you can win over those who doubt you is by practicing what you preach.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
There may be a pile of work that needs to be done but does it have to be done immediately? Of course not. Stay calm and make today a day of relaxation.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
You probably don't care in the slightest that not everyone approves of your methods. That's fine, but don't antagonize people for the sake of it. Haven't you got enough problems already?

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
Both career and family matters may be under heavy influences at the moment but in a matter of days you will realize there was precious little to really be worried about. A sense of humour is a must.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Travel plans may not run smoothly today and although you may take delays in your stride other people will get hot under the collar. Make things easier for yourself, and others, by not making last minute changes.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Today's full moon may have you behaving in irrational ways, so wait a day before making important decisions. Do something positive and try not to give yourself too much time to think.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
More than likely you will find yourself at odds with loved ones. If you get through the day with no blazing rows, you will have done very well indeed.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
With the right attitude, all things are possible. With the wrong attitude even the smallest of problems seems insurmountable. Keep that thought in mind and you will find it easier to smile and get through the day.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
You are acutely aware of injustice but sometimes you see injustice where it does not in fact exist. Be careful what causes you get involved in today because your emotions may be a little bit off-centre.

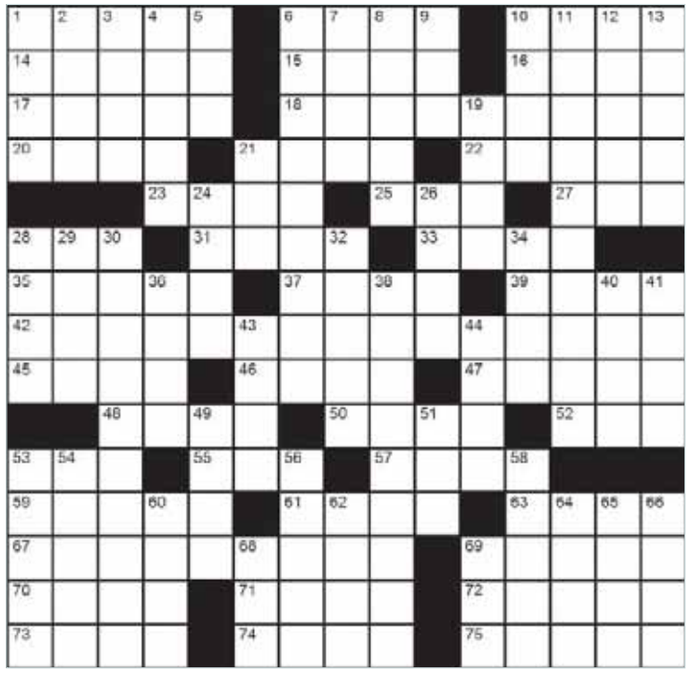
♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You know what you like and you don't care if no one else on the planet agrees. You may face considerable opposition today but in a strange way it will energize you.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Why do so many people you don't like insist on getting close to you? Maybe it's because your subconscious is attracting them. Or maybe they're in the mood for a fight. Either way, there will be ructions today.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Don't jump to conclusions today or you could spend the rest of the week apologizing for something. It may look as if someone is behaving in anti-social ways but looks can be deceiving. **SALLY BROMPTON**

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

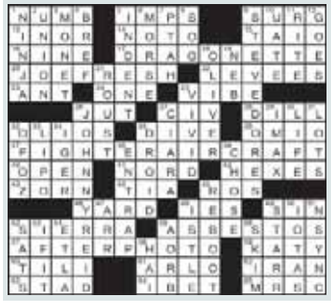
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. Singer Justin, to fans
6. "__ and Michele's High School Reunion"
10. Helper, for short
14. Sarah McLachlan song
15. Bit of a classic tongue-twister, "__ Wood sawed wood."
16. "The Cosby Show" son
17. Newfoundland's __ Banks
18. NFB = National __ __
20. Riverbank deposit
21. Reply to, for short
22. Get married again
23. Mix
25. "Hotfoot it, horse!"
27. US tax bureau
28. Bawl
31. CANADA has __ _, Three As...
33. Double
35. Without the extras
37. Zap
39. NY Mets ballpark, __ Field
42. Cadbury's seasonal treats: 3 wds.
45. Actor, Dick Van __
46. Carrier of blood
47. Purport
48. Roof's rim thingy
50. Env. info
52. "Promiscuous" singer ...her initials-sharer
53. Decide
55. Hesitant sounds
57. Don Juan type
59. Rustic retreat
61. Potato chips brand
63. Does up a jacket
67. CBC series set in the Alberta foothills
69. FOX's "Glee" character
70. Rattling breathing sound
71. Border
72. Bryan Adams tune
73. Photocopies made bigger, for short
74. Celebrity chef, Paula __
75. Where actors might be: 2 wds.

Down
1. Purses
2. Crucifix inscription
3. Equal: French
4. Tendencies
5. Like the purchased house [abbr.]
6. Citation
7. Medical suffix
8. Ralph __ ("Happy Days" role)
9. "Delish!"
10. Stick _ __ in the water
11. Jean Chretien's home-town in Quebec
12. More dry
13. Namesakes of actor Mr. Bridges
19. Cauldron's content
21. __ Tin Tin
24. Musical quality
26. Any thing
28. Went too fast
29. Skin care products brand
30. Sport invented in 1891 by McGill grad James Naismith
32. Governing body of The Vatican
34. Reykjavik is its cap.
36. Virginia willow
38. Canadiens great goaltender-turned-politician: 2 wds.
40. Two-days-from-Wed. exclamation!
41. Belief systems
43. Winnebago owner, informally
44. Hosiery hue
49. Let off steam
51. Li'l hairstyles
53. Earthy pigment
54. Praiseful hymn in ancient Greece
56. "Run Runaway" band from England
58. Canadian rock producer, Bob __
60. Wraths
62. Brad's beloved, briefly
64. "Take __ __ a blessing.
65. Hardwood flooring choice
66 Show to one's table
68. Zeppelin's pal
69. Hubbub

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

7	5		2	1				
		8	5	4				2
2					9	1	5	
4		1			5		2	
	3		8		4		7	
	8		1			3		6
	9	4	6					5
1				5	8	7		
				2	1		3	9

Yesterday's Sudoku

9	6	7	3	5	2	8	4	1
4	2	8	1	6	7	9	5	3
5	1	3	4	9	8	2	6	7
8	3	6	9	1	4	5	7	2
2	4	9	5	7	6	3	1	8
1	7	5	2	8	3	4	9	6
3	5	2	6	4	1	7	8	9
7	9	1	8	2	5	6	3	4
6	8	4	7	3	9	1	2	5

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